This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

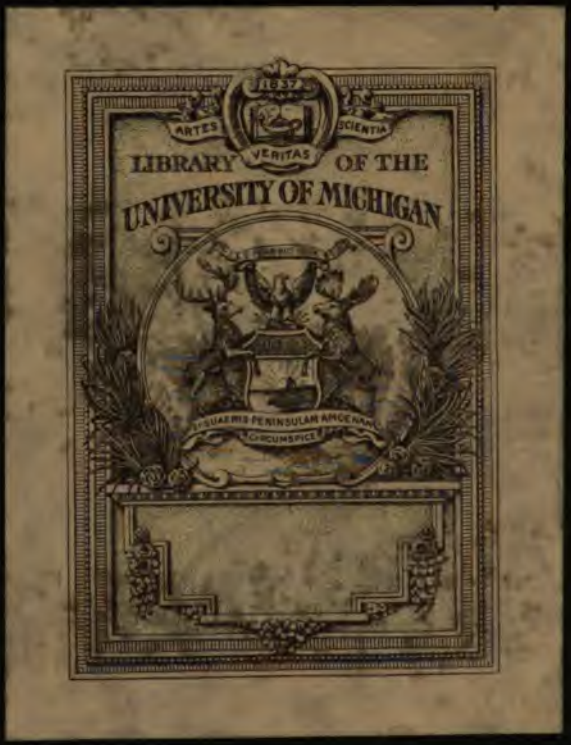
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

B 451975

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

72-CS. 4-7.

BX
5037
.B28

THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

Digitized by Google

Cambridge:
PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Digitized by Google

THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

Edited for the Syndics of the University Press

BY

THE REV. ALEXANDER NAPIER, M.A.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, VICAR OF HOLKHAM, NORFOLK.

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING

THIRTEEN SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

CAMBRIDGE:
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.
M.DCCC.LIX.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III.

SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS (CONTINUED).

PAGE

SERMON XXXVII.
(COLLATED.)
OF CONTENTMENT.
PHILIPPIANS IV. 11.
I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content 1—126

SERMON XXXVIII.
OF PATIENCE.
1 PETER II. 21.
Because also Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps . . . . . 127—154

SERMON XXXIX.
(COLLATED, WITH ADDITIONS FROM MS.)
REJOICE EVERMORE.
1 THESSALONIANS V. 16.
Rejoice evermore . . . . . 155—179

[SECOND SERMON ON THE SAME TEXT. INCOMPLETE; NOW FIRST PRINTED] . . . . . 179—195

SERMON XL.
(COLLATED.)
KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE.
PROVERBS IV. 23.
Keep thy heart with all diligence. . . . . . 196—236

Digitized by Google

PAGE

SERMON XLI.

(COLLATED, WITH ADDITIONS FROM MS.)

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom . . . . . 237—271

SERMON XLII.

(COLLATED.)

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom . . . . . 272—300

SERMON XLIII.

(COLLATED.)

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM CXIX. 60.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments . 301—343

SERMON XLIV.

(COLLATED.)

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLESIASTES IX. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might . 344—368

SERMON XLV.

(COLLATED.)

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLESIASTES IX. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might . 369—393

SERMON XLVI.

(COLLATED.)

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR GENERAL CALLING, AS CHRISTIANS.

ROMANS XII. 11.

Not slothful in business . . . . . 394—417

Digitized by Google

PAGE

SERMON XLVII.

(COLLATED.)

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING, AS GENTLEMEN AND SCHOLARS.

ROMANS XII. 11.

Not slothful in business . . . . . 418—452

SERMON XLVIII.

(COLLATED, WITH ADDITIONS FROM MS.)

THE UNSEARCHABLENESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

ROMANS XI. 33.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . . . 453—489

SERMON XLIX.

(COLLATED.)

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM CXLV. 9.

The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works . . . . . 490—526

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXXVII.

OF CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. IV. 11.

I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content[a].

IN these words, by the example of an eminent saint, is recommended to us the practice of an excellent duty, or virtue; a practice in itself most worthy, very grateful to God, and immediately of great benefit to ourselves; being, indeed, necessary towards the comfortable enjoyment of our lives: it is contentedness; the virtue, which, of all other, doth most render this world acceptable, and constituteth a kind of temporal heaven[b]; which he that hath, is thereby *ipso facto* in good measure happy, whatever other things he may seem to want; which he that wanteth, doth, however otherwise he be furnished, become miserable, and carrieth a kind of hell within him: it cannot therefore but well deserve our best study about it, and care to get it; in imitation of St Paul, who had learned in whatever state he was, therein to be content.

In discoursing upon which words, I shall consider two particulars: First, the virtue itself, (contentedness in every state,) the nature of which I

[a] Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον, ἐν οἷς εἰμὶ, αὐτάρκης εἶναι.

[b] Τὸ δ' αὐταρκες τίθεμεν, ὁ μονούμενον, αἱρετὸν ποιεῖ τὸν βίον, καὶ μηδενὸς ἐνδεᾶ.—Arist. Eth. 1. 7. [7.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

shall endeavour to explain; then, the way of attaining or producing it, implied by St Paul in the words, *I have learned.*

I. For explication of the virtue: the word here expressing it is *αὐτάρκεια*, which signifieth self-sufficiency, or having enough of oneself; the which is not to be understood absolutely[c], as if he took himself to be independent in nature, able to subsist of himself, not wanting any support or comfort without himself, (for this is the property and privilege of the great *El-shaddai*, who alone subsisteth of himself, needing toward his being and felicity nothing without himself; this is repugnant to the nature of man, who is a creature essentially dependent for his being and subsistence, indigent of many things for his satisfaction and welfare,) but relatively, considering his present state, the circumstances wherein he was, and the capacities he had; which by God's disposal and providence were such, that he could not want more than he had in his possession or reach. He meant not to exclude God, and his providence; but rather supposed that as the ground and cause of his self-sufficiency; according as otherwhere he expresseth it: *Not as if we were sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God:* nor did he intend to exclude the need of other creatures, otherwise than as considered without his possession, or beyond his power; but he meaneth only, that he did not desire or lack more than what God had supplied him with; had put into his hand, or had set within his reach; that his will did suit to his state, his desire did not exceed his power.

2 Cor. iii. 5.

[c] Τὸ γὰρ εὐδαιμονοῦν ἀπέχειν δεῖ πάντα ἃ θέλει, πεπληρωμένῳ τινὶ ἐοικέναι· οὐ δίψος δεῖ προσεῖναι αὐτῷ οὐ λιμόν.—Epict. Diss. III. 24. [17.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

This is the meaning of the word which the Apostle useth: but for the more full and clear understanding the virtue itself, we shall first consider the object, about which it is conversant; then the several acts, which it requireth, or wherein the exercise thereof consisteth.

1 The object of contentedness is the present state of things, whatever it be, (whether prosperous or adverse, of eminency or meanness, of abundance or scantiness,) wherein by divine Providence we are set: Τὰ ἐν οἷς ἐσμὲν, *The things in which we are;* that is, our present condition with all its circumstances: so it may be gènerally supposed, considering that it is ordinary, and almost natural for men (who have not learned as St Paul had done, or are not instructed and exercised in the practice of this duty) to be dissatisfied and disquieted in every state; to be always in want of something; to find defects in every fortune; to fancy they may be in better case, and to desire it earnestly. If we estimate things wisely, rich men are more liable to discontent than poor men. It is observable, that prosperity is a peevish thing, and men of highest fortune are apt most easily to resent the smallest things: a little neglect, a slight word, an unpleasing look doth affect them more than reproaches, blows, wrongs do those of a mean condition. Prosperity is a nice and squeamish thing: it is hard to find any thing able to please men of full and prosperous state; their state being uncapable of bettering in substantial things, they can hardly find matter of solid delight. Whereas a poor estate is easily comforted by the accession of many things which it wanteth: a good meal, a small gift, a little gain, or good

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

success of his labour doth greatly please a poor man with a very solid pleasure: but a rich man hath nothing to please him, but a new toy, a puff of applause, success at a horse-race, at bowls, at hunting; in some petty sport and pastime, which can yield but a very thin and transitory satisfaction to any man not quite brutified and void of sense: whence contentedness hath place, and is needful in every condition, be it in appearance never so pro-

Job xx. 22.

sperous, so plentiful, so pleasant. *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.*

The formal object thereof may, indeed, seem to be a condition distasteful to our sense, or cross to our fancy[d]; an adverse or strait condition; a condition of poverty, of disgrace, of any great inconvenience or distress incident to us in this world; but since the most men are absolutely in such a condition, exposed to so many wants and troubles; since many more are needy comparatively, wanting the conveniences that others enjoy, and which themselves affect; since there are few, who in right estimation are not indigent and poor, that is, who do not desire and fancy themselves to want many things which they have not, (for wealth consisteth not so much in the possession of goods, as in apprehension of freedom from want, and in satisfaction of desires,) since care, trouble, disappointment, satiety, and discontent following them, do not only haunt cottages, and stick to the lowest sort of people, but do even frequent palaces, and pursue men of highest rank; therefore any state may be the object of contentedness; and the duty is

[d] [Οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῇ φύσει τῶν πραγμάτων, ὡς ἐν τῇ γνώμῃ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τῆς εὐθυμίας.]—Chrys. ad Dem. Ep. III. Opp. Tom. VII. p. 68.

Digitized by Google

of a very general concernment; princes themselves need to learn it; the lessons teaching it, and the arguments persuading it, may as well suit the rich and noble, as the poor and the peasant; so our Apostle himself doth intimate in the words immediately following our text: *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need:* he had the art, not only to manage well both conditions, but to be satisfied in either. SERM. XXXVII. Phil. iv. 12.

But seeing real adversity, poverty, and disgrace have naturally the strongest influence in disturbing and disordering our minds; that contentedness is plainly most needful in such cases, as the proper support, or medicine of our mind in them; that other states do need it only as they, by fancy or infirmity, do symbolize or conspire with these; therefore unto persons in these states we shall more explicitly apply our directions and persuasions, as to the proper and primary subjects of contentedness; the which by analogy, or parity of reason, may be extended to all others, who, by imaginary wants and distresses, do create displeasure to themselves. So much for the object, or the subject, of the virtue.

2 The acts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth, (which are necessary ingredients, or constant symptoms of it,) belong either to the mind and understanding, or to the will and appetite, or to external demeanour and practice; being, 1 right opinions and judgments of mind; 2 fit dispositions and affections of heart; 3 outward good actions and behaviours, in regard to our condition and the

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

events befalling us; the former being as the root and stock, the latter as the fruits and the flowers of the duty: unto which may be reduced the correspondent negations, or absence, of bad judgments, affections, and deportments in respect to the same objects.

(1) As to our opinions and judgments of things, contentedness requireth, that,

1 We should believe our condition, whatever it be, to be determined by God; and that all events befalling us do proceed from him; at least that he permitteth and ordereth them according to his judgment and pleasure; that, Ξὺν τῷ Θεῷ πᾶς καὶ γελᾷ κῳδύρεται[e]; all, as the Prophet singeth, *Both good and evil, proceedeth out of the mouth of the Most High;* that, *Affliction,* as Job said, *cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;* as a thing arising spontaneously, or sowed by the hand of some creature; but rather descendeth from him, who saith, *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.*

Lam. iii. 38. Amos iii. 6. 1 Kings xii. 15, 24. Job v. 6. Isai. xlv. 7.

We are apt, when any thing falleth out unpleasant to us, to exclaim against fortune, and to accuse our stars[f]; or to inveigh against the second causes which immediately offend us, ascribing all to their influence; which proceeding doth argue in us a heathenish ignorance and infidelity, or at least much inconsiderateness, and impotency of mind; that our judgment is blinded and clouded, or perverted and seduced by ill passions; for that, in truth,

[e] Soph. Ajax. [383.]

[f] Atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater.— [Virg. Ecl. v. 23.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

there is not in the world any occurrence merely fortuitous or fatal, (all being guided and wielded by the powerful hand of the All-wise and Almighty God,) there is no creature which in its agency doth not depend upon God, as the instrument of his will, or subordinate thereto; wherefore upon every event we should, raising our minds above all other causes, discern and acknowledge God's hand: as David did, when Shimei cursed him; *Let him,* said the good king, *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David;* as Job did, when he was rifled of his goods, *The Lord,* said he, *gave, and the Lord hath taken away;* as our Saviour did, when, in regard to the sore hardships he was designed to undergo, he said, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

2 Sam. xvi. 10.

Job i. 21.

John xviii. 11.

2 Hence we should always judge every thing which happeneth to be throughly good and fit, worthy (all things considered) to be appointed, or permitted by that Governor of things; not entertaining any harsh thoughts of God, as if he were not enough wise, just, or benign in ordering us to be afflicted or crossed; but taking all occurrences to be well consistent with all God's holy perfections and attributes[g].

We are apt to conceit that the world is ill ordered, when we do not thrive and prosper therein; that every thing is irregular which squareth not to the models of our fancy; that things had gone much better, if our designs had found success: but these are vain and perverse conceits; for that, cer-

[g] Παραχωρήσωμεν τοίνυν παρακαλῶ τῷ σοφῷ τοῦ παντὸς κυβερνήτῃ, καὶ στέρξωμεν τὰ οἰκονομούμενα, ὁποῖα ποτ' ἂν ᾖ, κἂν θυμέρη, κἂν λυπηρά. &c.—Theodor. Ep. CXXXVI. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 1010. B.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

tainly, is most good which seemeth good to God[h]; his will is a perfect standard of right and convenience, his eye never aimeth wrong, his hand never faileth to hit the mark of what is best; *All his paths are mercy and truth; He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;* so did king Hezekiah rightly judge, when, upon denunciation of a sad doom to his country and posterity, he replied to the prophet; *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken;* so even the Pagan Sage discerned, when he thus rebuked a malecontent; *You slave, do you forsooth desire any thing, but what is best? and is not that only best, which seemeth best to God*[i]*?*

Ps. xxv. 10; cxlv. 17.

2 Kings xx. 19.

3 We should even be satisfied in our mind, that, according to God's purpose, all events do tend and conduce to our particular welfare; being not only good to us as members of the world, and in order to more general ends, but serving towards our private benefit and advantage. We may be ready, perhaps, to confess, that whatever happeneth may be, indeed, just and fit in some distant and occult respects; but hardly can we be induced to allow, that what we feel offensive to our sense and fancy is really good for us, or was meant for our benefit; we cannot easily discern any thing of love or favour in such matters: those sort of aphorisms,

[h] Placeat homini, quicquid Deo placuit.—Sen. [Ep. LXXIV. 20.] Στέργειν γὰρ χρὴ τὰ παρὰ τῆς ἀρρήτου σοφίας πρυτανευόμενα, καὶ ταῦτα πάντως νομίζειν συμφέροντα.—Theodor. Ep. XV. [Tom. III. p. 909 B.]

Οἶδε γὰρ ὡς σοφὸς τὸ συμφέρον, καὶ ὡς ἀγαθὸς τοῦτο ἡμῖν πραγματεύεται.—Id. Ep. XVIII. [Tom. III. p. 913 A.]

[i] Ἀνδράποδον, ἄλλο γάρ τι θέλεις ἢ τὸ ἄμεινον; ἄλλο οὖν τι ἄμεινον, ἢ τὸ τῷ Θεῷ δοκοῦν;—Epict. Diss. [II. 7, 13.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

in holy scripture, *Happy is the man whom God correcteth; As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;* sound strangely, and are huge paradoxes to us; such is our blindness of mind, and dulness of apprehension: but God knoweth with so exact a skilfulness to manage things, that every particular occurrence shall be advantageous to the person whom it toucheth; and accordingly to each one he dispenseth that which is most suitable to him; whence, as frequently it is necessary for our good that we should be crossed, (for that, indeed, otherwise we should often much harm, sometimes we should quite undo, ourselves,) so it always, when God so ordereth it, is to be deemed most profitable and wholesome for us: we are therefore in reason obliged to take the saddest accidents and sharpest afflictions, coming upon us by Providence, to be no other than fatherly corrections, or friendly rebukes, designed to render us good and happy; as arguments therefore and instances of especial good-will toward us; conceiving under every dispensation that we do, as it were, hear God speaking to us, as he did to those in the Prophet; *I know the thoughts, that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

Job v. 17. Jamesi. 12. Rev. iii. 19. Prov. iii. 12.

Jer. xxix. 11.

4 Hence we are to believe, that our present condition (whatever it be to carnal or worldly sense) is in right judgment, all things considered, the best; most proper, most desirable for us; better than we, if it were at our discretion and choice, should put ourselves into: for that God (*The Saviour of all men, Who desireth that no man should perish; Who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works;* who exceedingly tendereth

1 Tim. ii. 4. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Ps. cxlv. 9.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

the welfare of his children and subjects) doth ever (here in this life, the time of merit and trial) with a most wise good-will design our best good; and by the most proper methods (such as do best suit our circumstances and capacities) doth aim to draw us unto happiness; and accordingly doth assign a station for us most befitting in order to that great end: we therefore should think ourselves well placed, because we are where God doth set us; that we have enough, because we have what God allotteth us.

There are other more particular judgments, which contentedness involveth, or which are required toward it; such as these: that nothing originally is due to us, but all cometh purely from divine favour and bounty; that all adversities are justly and deservedly inflicted on us, as the due wages, or natural fruits of our sins; that our happiness dependeth not on any present enjoyments or possessions, but may well subsist without them; that a competency (or so much as sufficeth to maintain our life without intolerable pain) ought to satisfy our desires: but these and the like judgments will come opportunely to be considered as motives to the practice of the duty.

(2) From such acts of our mind, or intellective part, concerning things incident to us, should proceed the following dispositions of will and affection.

1 We should entertain all occurrences, how grievous soever to us, with entire submission, and resignation of our will to the will of God; wholly acquiescing in his good pleasure; saying in our hearts after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be*

Luke xxii. 42.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

done; with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* with David, *Behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him;* even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be*[k]; with Epictetus, *I always chiefly will that which cometh to pass; for I account that better which God willeth, than what I will myself; I will adhere as a minister and follower to him, I pursue, I affect, I simply will with him*[l]: looking upon them as sent from God, we should heartily bid them welcome, we should kindly embrace them, we should use them with all fair respect: Ἀσπάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα, (*To hug,* or *kindly to embrace things incident,*) Φιλεῖν τὰ ἀπονεμόμενα, (*To love things dispensed by Providence*[m],) are precepts, which even as dictated by natural reason philosophers do much inculcate.

1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Sam. xv. 26.

This excludeth all rebellious insurrection, and swellings of mind against Providence, such as argue that we dislike God's government; that, were we able, we should struggle with God's will; that we gladly would shake off his yoke; all such ill resentment and repining at our lot, which maketh God's hand grievous, and his yoke uneasy to us; such affections as the Wise Man toucheth, when he saith, *The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.*

Prov. xix. 3.

2 We should bear all things with steady calmness and composedness of mind, suppressing or quelling those tumults, those storms, those excesses of passion, which the sense of things dis-

[k] Εἰ ταύτῃ τοῖς θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτῃ ἔστω.—[Plato. Crito. 43 D.]

[l] Ἀεὶ μᾶλλον ἐκεῖνο θέλω, τὸ γινόμενον. κρεῖττον γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι, ὃ ὁ Θεὸς θέλει, ἢ ἐγώ. προσκείσομαι διάκονος καὶ ἀκόλουθος ἐκείνῳ, συνορμῶ, συνορέγομαι, ἁπλῶς συνθέλω.—Epict. Diss. [IV. 7. 20.]

[m] M. Ant. III. § 4. II. § 17. X. § 11. XII. § 1.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

gustful is apt to excite; such as are immoderate grief, fierce anger, irksome despair, and the like.

No adversity should so ruffle our minds[n], as to defeat or pervert the use of our reason, so as to hinder us from perceiving or performing what becometh us, so as to engage us into any irregular or unseemly behaviour.

3 We should, indeed, bear the worst events with an *εὐθυμία*, that is, with a sweet and cheerful disposition of mind, so as not to be put out of humour; not to be dejected or quite discouraged by them[o], not to fall into that *Heaviness*, which, as the Wise Man saith, *maketh the heart of man to stoop;* but rather finding delight and complacence in them, as considering whence they come, whither they aim and tend: such was the disposition and demeanour of the apostles and primitive good Christians in the midst of their most grievous adversities and sufferings[p]; *They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name: They did take joyfully the spoiling of their goods: They did account it all joy when they fell into divers tribulations:* they were, Ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, *As grieved, but always rejoicing;* their state was grievous, but their heart was constantly cheerful. Such a constant frame of mind we should maintain, so continually prepared we should be against all contingencies, that nothing should happen amiss to us, so as deeply to affect us, or to unsettle us in

Prov. xii. 25.

Acts v. 41. Heb. x. 34. James i. 2. 2 Cor. vi. 10.

[n] *Let no man be moved by these afflictions;* Μηδένα σαίνεσθαι (i. e. θορυβεῖσθαι. Chrys. [in locum. Opp. Tom. IV. p. 175.]) 1 Thess. iii. 3.

[o] Ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται.—2 Cor. vii. 10.

[p] Εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς, ἐν στενοχωρίαις ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ.—2 Cor. xii. 10.

Εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν, καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς.—Col. i. 11.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

our humour; that every thing from God's hand should be acceptable; that no sadness may seize on us, at least that we do not indulge or cherish it; that in nowise we suffer any regret to quench that spiritual comfort and joy in God, which becometh the upright, as the Psalmist saith, and which we are so often enjoined perpetually to maintain, as in all cases, so particularly under afflictions and trials. We cannot, indeed, hardly be content, if we are not cheerful; for it is hard to be altogether on the suffering and bearing hand, without any pleasure: the mind can hardly stand in a poise, so as neither to sorrow or joy; we cannot digest adversity, if we do not relish it; we shall not submit to it as his will, if we do not take it for an argument of his love: Εὐδοκῶ, *I*, saith St Paul, *have a liking* or *pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Ps. xxxiii. 1; xcvii. 12. Phil. iv. 4; iii. 1. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 13.

2 Cor. xii. 10.

4 We should with faith and hope rely and wait on God for the removal or easement of our afflictions; or, however, we should confide in him for grace, and strength to support them well; as our Saviour did, when he prayed, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup;* as they did in the Prophet, who said, *In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited on thee;* according to that rule in the Lamentations, *It is good that a man should both hope, and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord;* and those precepts in the Psalms, *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*

Luke xxii. 42.

Isai. xxvi. 8; xxxiii. 2.

Lam. iii. 26.

Ps. xxxvii. 7; xxvii. 14; xl. 1; xxxiii. 20; lxii. 1; xxv. 3; lxix. 6; xvi. 8.

We should, in any case, be ready with the holy

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

Psalmist thus to interrogate and sustain ourselves: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou so disquieted within we? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance.*

Ps. xlii. 5.

Remembering and considering, (that as we are expressly taught in Scripture, and as all our Religion doth clearly suppose) *God knoweth to rescue the godly out of tribulation;* (he knoweth the proper season, when it is fit to do it;) that *He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it;* reflecting, I say, on these certain points of Christian truth, *We should never sorrow as those who are without hope;* we should never despair of a good riddance from our adversity, when it shall be seasonable or beneficial for us; we should always be assured of a comfortable support under it, which is usually better than deliverance from it; our minds should never sink into despondency or disconsolateness: that this is practicable in the worst case, we have conspicuous instances to assure us; it hath been the practice of most illustrious and excellent persons, particularly of the holy Apostles; never was any condition, in outward respects and appearance, more forlorn and dismal than was theirs; yet it nowise bereaved them of hope or courage: *We,* they could say, *are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

2 Pet. ii. 9. 1 Pet. v. 7. Matt. vi. 25. 1 Cor. x. 13. 1 Thess. iv. 13. Isai. xl. 31. Mic. vii. 7. 2 Cor. iv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 11.

5 We should indeed not so much as faint or languish in our minds upon any such occasion; no ad-

Digitized by Google

versity should impair the forces of our reason or our spirit; should enervate our courage, or slacken our industry; should render us sick, or weak in heart; for, *If,* saith the Wise Man, *thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,* (it is the sign of an infirm mind,) and, Μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *Not to falter* or *decay,* Μὴ ἐκλύεσθαι, *Not to be dissolved,* or *disjointed in our souls,* (as the body is in scorbutic distempers,) are rules prescribed to us in such cases: we do then, indeed, need a firm and robust constitution of soul[q]; we should then bear up most resolutely and stoutly: the encouragement of Moses to the people entering upon battle, may well be accommodated to us, in regard to our conflict with adversities; *Let not your hearts faint, fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them.*

SERM. XXXVII.

Prov. xxiv. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 16. Rev. ii. 3. 2 Thess. iii. 13. Gal. vi. 9. Heb. xii. 3.

Deut. xx. 3.

6 We should not be weary of our condition, or have irksome longings for alteration; but, with a quiet indifferency and willingness of mind, lie under it during God's pleasure; according to the Wise Man's advice; *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction;* and that of the Apostle, enforced by our Lord's example; *Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.* We should not think God slow, or his time long and tedious, as if he were forgetful of us, or backward to succour us; as the Psalmist was inclined to do, when in the day of trouble he brake forth into these conceits and expressions: *Will the Lord cast off for*

Prov. iii. 11.

Heb. xii. 3.

Ps. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9.

[q] Nunc animis opus—nunc pectore firmo.—
[Virg. Æn. vi. 261.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Thus he in a sad mood was apt to think and speak; but, recollecting himself, he perceived it was his error, and confessed it was his fault thus to imagine; *I said it was mine infirmity;* and it will be ours likewise, if we entertain such conceptions and resentments: we should with the same mind endure our present state, as we do pass through a hard winter, or a time of foul weather, taking it for seasonable and fit, because the wise Author of nature hath so appointed and ordered it.

ver. 10.

7 We should by adverse accidents be rendered lowly in our own eyes, and sober in our conceits of ourselves; meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirit; sensible of our unworthiness and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury, and misery, of our actual offences and miscarriages; deeply affected in regard to the awful majesty and power, to the perfect holiness and strict justice of God; they should quell our haughty stomach, they should supple our stiff wilfulness, they should soften our hard hearts, they should mitigate our peevish humours: to effect these things is usually the design of such accidents, and it is ever the best fruit of them: this is that which St Peter adviseth to, when he saith, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;* which God approveth, and encourageth with a gracious promise, when he saith, *To this man will I look, even to him, that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word:* this disposition is an inseparable ad-

1 Pet. v. 6.

Isai. lxvi. 2.

Digitized by Google

herent to contentedness; he that hath not his spirit thus broken, or mollified, will hardly be content in any state; he that is haughty in conceit, and sturdy in humour, will every where find that which will cross and disturb him. SERM. XXXVII.

8 It is required that we should, notwithstanding any meanness, any hardness of our condition, be meekly and kindly affected toward others, being satisfied and pleased with their more prosperous state[r]. We should not be angry with the world, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; we should not be sullen or peevish toward any man, because his fortune is better than ours; we should not repine or grudge at the good success of any of our brethren, because we want the like ourselves; *We should rather rejoice with those that rejoice;* innocently filching some pleasure from them, or borrowing some satisfaction from their enjoyments. It is humane thus to do, because of the natural cognation and friendship of men; it is more especially Christian, because of our spiritual consanguinity; by virtue whereof we are so knit together, and made *Members each to other,* that *If,* as St Paul telleth us, *one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honoured, all the members should rejoice with it:* we can hardly be content without thus appropriating the goods, and sharing in the delights of others: he can never be content, who looketh with an evil eye upon other men's prosperity; he cannot do well

Rom. xii. 15.

Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

[r] Ita plerumque contingit, ut dum aliquos fratres nostros in quantulacumque requie constitutos, in mediis nostris anxietatibus cogitamus, non parva ex parte recreemur, tanquam et nos in ipsis quietius tranquilliusque vivamus.—Aug. Ep. CXLV. ad Anast. [Opp. Tom. II. col. 470 B.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

himself who loveth not to see his neighbour do well; numberless occasions will happen to discompose and vex him.

Adversity impatiently borne is apt to sour our spirits, and render us froward toward men; especially when it proceedeth from the unkindness, ingratitude, or treachery of friends, or of persons obliged to us for our good-will, or for benefits done to them: but nothing should render us unkindly disposed toward the world, nothing should extinguish charity in us toward any man; so plain reason teacheth us, so great examples enforce: Moses did not lose his affection towards his countrymen, because he was by one of them threatened away into banishment and vagrancy; the apostles became not disaffected to the world, because it misused and persecuted them; our Lord did continue most earnestly to desire, and laboriously to endeavour the good of those who most despitefully used him: like theirs, in all cases, should our disposition be; we should ever observe the Psalmist's advice; *Cease from anger, forsake wrath, fret not thyself in anywise to do evil.* Again,

Ps. xxxvii. 8.

9 Contentedness doth imply a freedom from all solicitude and anxiety of mind, in reference to provision for our needs, and conveniences of life; according to those rules and precepts of casting our burden and care upon the Lord, of being careful for nothing, but commending our affairs to God's ordering; according to that most comfortable precept of our Lord, *Take no care, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, How shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye want all these things.* If we do not thus, it

1 Pet. v. 7. Ps. xxxvii. 5; lv. 22. Phil. iv. 6. μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε

Matt. vi. 31.

Digitized by Google

is hardly possible that we should be content; if we do not depend upon Providence, we cannot escape being often distracted with care, and perplexed with fear; we cannot cheerfully hope for any thing we need, nor be quietly secure of any thing we possess. SERM. XXXVII.

10 It requireth also, that we should curb our desires, and confine them in the narrowest bounds we can; so as not to affect more in quantity, or better in quality, than our nature and state do require: if we must have superfluities, if we can only relish dainties, we shall never be pleased[s]; for as nature hath limits, and is content with little[t]; as there is no state in this world, the exigencies whereof may not be answered with a competence; so curiosity is an infinite and insatiable thing: *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich;* that is, he which is curious and nice in his desires will never have enough: the rule, which, according to St Paul, should regulate our desires, is this; *Having food and raiment, let us with them be satisfied:* if this will satisfy us, we may easily obtain satisfaction[u]: a moderate industry, with God's blessing, will procure so much; God hath promised to bestow it; if this will not suffice, there is no sure way of getting or keeping more: as God is nowise obliged to provide us superfluities, or concerned to relieve our extravagant longings; Prov. xxii. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 8.

[s] Ἥδιστα πολυτελείας ἀπολαύουσιν οἱ ἥκιστα ταύτης δεόμενοι.—Epic. ad Menœc. [Diog. Laert. x. 27, 130.]

Ventre nihil novi frugalius.—
Juv. Sat. v. 6.

[t] Αἱ κατὰ φύσιν ὀρέξεις αὐταρκείᾳ περιορίζονται.—Clem. Alex. Pæd. II. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 175.]

[u] Si ad naturam vives, nunquam eris pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam dives.—Epic. apud Sen. Ep. XVI. [6.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

so we may fear, that Providence will be ready to cross us in our cares and endeavours tending to those purposes; so that we shall be disappointed in the procurement, or disturbed in the fruition of such needless things. However, he that is most scant in his desires, is likely to be most content in his mind: *He,* as Socrates said, *is nearest the gods* (who need nothing) *that needeth fewest things*[x].

11 In fine, contentedness doth import, that, whatever our condition is, our minds and affections should be modelled and squared just according to it; so that our inclinations be compliant, our desires be congruous thereto; so that easily we can comport with the inconveniences, can relish the comforts, can improve the advantages sticking thereto; otherwise, like an ill-made garment, it will sit unhandsome upon us, and be troublesome to us. It is not usually our condition itself, but the unsuitableness thereof to our disposition and desires, (which soureth all its sweets, and rendereth its advantages fruitless,) that createth discontent; for although it be very mean, others bear the same cheerfully; many would be glad thereof: if therefore we will be content, we must bend our inclinations, and adapt our desires to a correspondence with our state.

If we are rich, we should get a large and bountiful heart, otherwise our wealth will hang loose about us; the care and trouble in keeping it, the suspicion and fear of losing it, the desire of amplifying it, the unwillingness to spend or use it, will bereave us of all true satisfaction therein, and

[x] [Ἐγὼ δὲ νομίζω τὸ μὲν μηδενὸς δέεσθαι θεῖον εἶναι, τὸ δ' ὡς ἐλαχίστων ἐγγυτάτω τοῦ θείου.—Xen. Mem. I. 6. 10.]

Digitized by Google

render it no less unsavoury to us, than unprofitable to others. SERM. XXXVII.

If we are poor, we should have a frugal, provident, industrious mind, sparing in desires, free from curiosity, willing to take pains, able to digest hardships; otherwise the straitness of our condition will pinch and gall us.

Are we high in dignity or reputation? we then need a mind well ballasted with sober thoughts, otherwise the wind of vanity will drive us into absurd behaviours, thence will dash us upon disappointments, and consequently will plunge us into vexation and discontent.

Are we mean and low? we need a meek and lowly, a calm and steady spirit; not affecting little respects, or resenting the want of them; apt to pass over or to bear quietly petty affronts and neglects; not apt to be moved by words signifying contempt or disdain; else (being fretted with such things, which in this ill-natured and hard-hearted world we may be sure often to meet with) we shall be uneasy in our minds, and impatiently wish a change of our state.

These and the like dispositions and affections of soul this duty containeth or requireth: from hence should arise a correspondent external demeanour, and such actions as these which follow:

1 We should restrain our tongues from all unseemly and unsavoury expressions, implying dissatisfaction in God's proceedings, or displeasure at his providence; arguing desperation or distrust in God; such as were those of the discontented and impatient Israelites; *They*, saith the Psalmist, *spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a* Ps. lxxviii. 19. Num. xxi. 5.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people? Such as they used, of whom the Isai. iii. 21. Prophet saith, *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King and their God;* as those in the Apocalypse, who, being afflicted Rev. xvi. 9, 11, 21. with deserved judgments, *Did blaspheme the name of God, which had power over those plagues—blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores.* Into such profane enormities of language is discontent apt to break forth, questioning the power of God, or his willingness to succour us; venting wrath and displeasure toward him; charging him foolishly with injustice, or with unkindness, or with negligence, or with impotency; the abstaining from which behaviour, under the sense of his bitter calamities, is a great commenda- Job i. 22. tion of Job; *In all this,* it is said, *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly*[y].

2 We should, indeed, forbear any the least complaint or murmuring, in regard to the dispensations of Providence; or upon dissatisfaction in the state allotted us: St Jude saith, that God in the Jude 15, 16. last day will come, *To execute judgment, and to convince men of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him: These,* subjoineth he, *are* γογγυσταὶ, μεμψίμοιροι, *murmurers, that complain of their lot;* which signifieth the heinousness and extreme dangerousness of this Lam. iii. 39. practice. *Wherefore doth the living man complain?*

[y] Οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἀφροσύνην τῷ Θεῷ.—Job i. 22. LXX.

Ἀλλ' ἔχε σιγῇ μῦθον, ἐπίτρεπτον δὲ θεοῖσι.—
Hom. Od. XIX. [502.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

is the prophet's question, implying it to be an unreasonable and blameable practice. Wherefore the advice of David is good; to suppress all complaint, to be still and silent in such cases: *Be still,* saith he, *and know that I am God;* and, *Be silent to the Lord;* the which precepts his practice may seem well to interpret and back; *I was,* saith he, *dumb; I opened not my mouth, because it was thy doing:* and accordingly Job, *Behold,* (said he, after having considered all the reasons he could imagine of God's proceedings,) *I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth*[z].

Ps. xlvi. 10; iv. 4; xxxvii. 7; xxxix. 9.

Job xl. 4.

3 Yea it is our duty, in these cases, to spend our breath in declaring our satisfaction in God's dealing with us; acknowledging his wisdom, justice, and goodness therein; blessing and praising him for all that hath befallen us[a]; each of us confessing after David, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;* imitating Job, who, upon the loss of all his goods, did say no more than this; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Ps. cxix. 75.

Job i. 21.

4 We should abstain from all irregular, unlawful, and unworthy courses toward the removal or remedy of our needs or crosses, choosing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relax ourselves; rather bearing patiently than violently, like those in the Prophet, breaking our yoke, and bursting

Jer. v. 5.

[z] Σιωπῇ
Πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλὰ, βίας ὑποδέγμενος ἀνδρῶν.—
Hom. [Od. XIII. 309.]

[a] Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν. Οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι τοῦτο ἐπιλέγων ἀεὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι μοι τοῖς συμβαίνουσι.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. XI. [Opp. Tom. VII. p. 90.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

our bands. *Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.* We should rather continue poor, than by cozenage or rapine endeavour to raise our fortune; we should rather lie under disgrace and contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances strive to acquire the respect and favour of men; we should rather willingly rest in the lowest condition, than do as those, who, by disturbing the world, by fomenting disorders and factions, by supplanting their neighbour's welfare, by venting slanders and detractions, do labour to amplify their estate: we should rather endure any inconvenience or distress, than have recourse to ways of evading them disallowed by God; doing as the Jews did, who in their straits, against the declared pleasure of God, *Set their faces toward Egypt, Strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, Trusted in the staff of that broken reed.* In neglect or diffidence toward God, to embrace such aids, is, as God in the Prophet declareth, a very blameable and mischievous folly: *Ephraim,* saith he, *is like a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria—Woe unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me.* We may consider how St Paul reproveth the Corinthians for seeking a redress of wrong, scandalous and dishonourable to the Church: *Now, therefore, it is utterly a fault among you, that ye go to law one with another; Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* Even to right ourselves in a way whereby any dishonour may come to God, or damage to his Church, is not to be approved; and better it is,

Job xxxvi. 21.

Jer. xlii. 15; ii. 18, 13. Isai. xxx. 2; xxxvi. 6; xxxi. 1. Ezek. xvii. 15.

Hos. vii. 11, 13.

1 Cor. vi. 7.

Digitized by Google

in the Apostle's judgment, to bear any injury or damage to ourselves: *Better it is*, saith St Peter, *if the will of God be so, that we suffer for well doing, than to do ill.* And, *Let them, who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator*, is another wholesome advice of that great apostle. SERM. XXXVII. 1 Pet. iii. 17; iv. 19.

5 We should, notwithstanding any adversity, proceed in our affairs (such as God requireth, or reason putteth us upon) with alacrity, courage, and industry; performing however, so far as our circumstances do permit, what is good and fit for us: no disappointment or cross, no straits or grievances of condition, should render us listless or lazy, but rather it should quicken and inflame our activity; this being a good way to divert us from the sense of our misfortunes, and to comfort us under their pressure; as also the readiest way to remove or to abate them. Τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέσθαι, *To order the present well*[b], whatever it be; to make the best of a bad matter, to march forward whither reason calls, how difficultly soever, or slowly it be, in a rough or dirty way; not to yield to difficulties, but resolutely to encounter them, to struggle lustily with them, to endeavour with all our might to surmount them[c]; are acts worthy of a manly reason and courage: to direct ill accidents to good ends, and improve them to honest uses, is the work of a noble virtue. If a bad game be dealt us, we should

[b] M. Ant. VI. § 2.

Κερδαντέον τὸ παρὸν σὺν εὐλογιστίᾳ.—Id. IV. § 26.

Τὸ παρὸν μόνον ἀπευθύνῃς πρὸς ὀσιότητα καὶ δικαιοσύνην.—Id. XII. § 1.

[c] Tu ne cede malis; sed contra audentior ito.
[Virg. Æn. VI. 95.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

not presently throw up, but play it out so well as we can; so perhaps we may save somewhat, we shall at least be busy till a better come. *Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good,* is the Psalmist's advice in such a case; and it is a practice necessary to the procuring and maintaining content; if we be not otherwise well employed, we shall be apt, in our thoughts, to melancholize, and dote upon our mischances, the sense of them will fasten upon our spirits, and gnaw our hearts.

Ps. xxxvii. 3.

6 We should behave ourselves fairly and kindly toward the instruments and abettors of our adversity; toward those who brought us into it, and those who detain us under it, by keeping off relief, and those who forbear to afford the succour we might expect; forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge or enmity toward them; but rather, even upon that score, bearing good-will, and expressing kindness toward them; not only as to our brethren, whom, according to the general law of charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, and the instruments of his pleasure toward us; considering, that by maligning or molesting them, we do express ill resentments of God's dealing with us, and, in effect, through their sides, do wound his Providence: thus did the good king behave himself toward Shimei, when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by him; not suffering (upon this account, because he was God's instrument of afflicting himself) that any harm should be done unto him: thus the holy Apostles *Being reviled, did bless: being defamed, did entreat:* thus our Lord demeaned himself toward his spiteful adver-

2 Sam. xvi. 7.

1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.

Digitized by Google

saries; *Who, when he was reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but committed it to him that judgeth righteously.* In all these cases we should at least observe the rules and advices of the Wise Man: *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work; say thou not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.*

1 Pet. ii. 23; iii. 9.

Prov. xxiv. 29; xx. 22.

Discontent usually consisteth not so much in displeasure for the things we suffer, as at the persons who bring them on us, or who do not help to rid us from them; it is their presumed injury or discourtesy which we do fret at: such passions therefore toward men being discarded, our evils presently will become supportable, and content easily will ensue. As men in any sickness or pain, if their friends are about them, affording comfort or assistance, do not seem to feel any thing, and forbear complaining; so, if the world about us doth please us, if we bear no disaffection or grudge toward any person in view, our adversity will appear less grievous, it will, indeed, commonly be scarce sensible to us.

In these and such like acts the duty and virtue of contentedness doth especially reside; or it is employed and exercised by them: and so much may suffice for the explication of its nature.

II. I come now to consider the way of attaining it, intimated by St Paul here, when he saith, *I have learned.*

These words signify how contentedness may be attained, or how it is produced: it is not an endowment innate to us; it is not injected by chance

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

into us; it is not to be purchased by any price; it springeth not up of itself, nor ariseth from the quality of any state; but it is a product of discipline; *I have learned.*

It is a question debated in Plato, Εἰ διδακτὸν ἡ ἀρετὴ, *Whether virtue be to be learned*[d]; St Paul plainly resolveth it in this case by his own experience and testimony. What Seneca saith in general of virtue, *Nature giveth not virtue; it is an art to become good*[e], is most true of this virtue; it is an art, with which we are not born, no more than with any other art or science; the which, as other arts, cannot be acquired without studious application of mind, and industrious exercise: no art indeed requireth more hard study and pain toward the acquiry of it, there being so many difficulties, so many obstacles in the way thereto: we have no great capacity, no towardly disposition to learn it; we must, in doing it, deny our carnal sense, we must settle our wild fancy, and suppress fond conceits; we must bend our stiff and stubborn inclinations; we must repress and restrain wanton desires; we must allay and still tumultuous passions; we must cross our humour and curb our temper: which to do is a hard chapter to learn; much consideration, much practice, much contention and diligence are required thereto.

Hence it is an art which we may observe few do much study; and of the students therein few

[d] [Plat. Menon.]

[e] Non enim dat natura virtutem; ars est bonum fieri.—Sen. Ep. [xc. 44.]

Virtus etiamsi quosdam impetus ex natura sumit, tamen perficienda doctrina est.—Quintil. xii. 2. [1.]

Digitized by Google

are great proficients; so that, *Qui fit, Mæcenas?* Horace's question, *How comes it to pass, that nobody liveth content with the lot assigned by God*[f]*?* wanted not sufficient ground.

However, it is not, like the quadrature of the circle, or the philosopher's stone, an art impossible to be learned, and which will baffle all study: there are examples, which shew it to be obtainable; there are rules and precepts, by observing which we may arrive to it.

And it is certainly a most excellent piece of learning; most deserving our earnest study: no other science will yield so great satisfaction, or good use; all other sciences, in comparison thereto, are dry and fruitless curiosities; for were we masters of all other knowledge, yet wanted the skill of being content, we should not be wise or happy; happiness and discontent are *ἀσύστατα*, (things incompatible).

But how then may this skill be learned? I answer, chiefly (divine grace concurring) by these three ways. 1 By understanding the rules and precepts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth. 2 By diligent exercise, or application of those rules to practice; whereby the habit will be produced. 3. By seriously considering, and impressing upon our minds those rational inducements (suggested by the nature and reason of things) which are apt to persuade the practice thereof. The first way I have already endeavoured to declare; the second wholly dependeth upon the will and endeavour of

[f] [Qui fit, Mæcenas, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem
Seu ratio dederit, seu fors objecerit, illa
Contentus vivat?
Hor. Sat. 1. 1. 1.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

the learner; the third I shall now insist upon, propounding some rational considerations, apt, by God's help, to persuade contentedness, and serving to cure the malady of discontent. They may be drawn from several heads; from God, from ourselves, from our particular condition or state; from the world, or general state of men here; from the particular state of other men in comparison to ours; from the nature and consequences of the duty itself; every thing about us, well examined and pondered, will minister somewhat inducing and assisting thereto.

1 Sam. iii. 18.

I. In regard to God we may consider, that equity doth exact, and gratitude requireth, and all reason dictateth, that we should be content; or that, in being discontented, we behave ourselves very unbeseemingly and unworthily, are very unjust, very ingrateful, and very foolish toward him.

1 Equity doth exact this duty of us, and in performing it we act justly toward God, both admitting his due right, and acknowledging his good exercise thereof; that saying in the Gospel, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* is a most evident maxim of equity: it is therefore the natural right and prerogative of God, as the Creator and Preserver, and consequently the absolute Lord, Owner, and Governor of all things, to assign his station, and allot his portion to every person, as he judgeth good and convenient; it is most just, that inviolably he should enjoy this right: he being also infinitely wise and good, it is likewise most just to acknowledge, that he doth perfectly well manage this right. Now by contentful submission to God's disposal of things, we do

Matt. xx. 15.

Digitized by Google

worthily express our due regard to both these, avowing his right, and approving his exercise thereof; but by discontent and regret at what happeneth, we do, in effect, injure God in both those respects, disavowing his right, and impeaching his management. We do thereby so renounce his right, as (so far as conceit and wish do reach) to invade it, and usurp it to ourselves; signifying, that in our opinion things ought not to be ordered according to his judgment and pleasure, but after our fancy and humour; we claim to ourselves the privilege of controlling his estate, and dispensing his goods, so as to be our own carvers, and to assume to ourselves so much as we think good; we imply, that, if we were able, we would extort the power out of his hands, and manage it ourselves, modelling the world according to our conceits and desires.

We do also, (since we cannot but perceive the other attempt of dispossessing God to be frivolous and fruitless,) in effect, charge God with misdemeanour, with iniquity or infirmity in his distribution and disposal of things; intimating, that in our opinion he doth not order them so justly or so wisely as might be[g], (not so well as we, in our wisdom and justice, should order them;) for did we conceive them managed for the best, we could not but judge it most unreasonable to be aggrieved, or to complain; so heinously insolent and unjust are we in being discontent. In earnest, which is most equal, that God should have his will, or we? For shame, we shall say, God: why then do we not contentedly let him have it?

[g] Multos inveni æquos adversus homines; adversus Deos neminem.—Sen. Ep. XCIII. [1.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

It is indeed, if we consider it, the highest piece of injustice that we can be guilty of, exceeding that which we commit in any other sort of disobedience. For, as in any state, seditious mutining is the greatest crime, as most directly violating the majesty, and subverting the authority of the prince; so in the world, none may be supposed more to offend and wrong its sovereign Governor, than such malecontents, who dislike and blame his proceedings: even a Heathen[h] could teach us, that it is our duty to subject our mind to him that administereth all things, as good citizens to the law of the commonwealth; if we do not, we are rebellious and seditious, which is the highest pitch of injustice toward our most gracious Sovereign.

Again, there can be no greater injury or affront offered to God, than to give him the lie, by questioning his veracity or fidelity; this discontent plainly doth involve: for God hath expressly declared himself ready upon all occasions to do us good; he hath promised to care for us, and never to forsake us, or leave us destitute; which word of his if we did not distrust, and take him to be unfaithful, we could not be discontent: as no man is displeased with his condition, or suspicious of want, who knoweth that he hath abundant supply of all he can need in a sure place; that he hath a person most able, most willing, most faithful, engaged to succour him; so, did we believe God to be true, who hath promised to help us, we could not be discontented for fear of any want.

1 John v. 10.

Matt. vi. 25, 34. Heb. xiii. 5.

We must at least, in so doing, suspect God to

[h] Τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην ὑποτέταχε τῷ διοικοῦντι τὰ ὅλα· καθάπερ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ πολῖται τῷ νόμῳ τῆς πόλεως.—Epict. Diss. I. 12. [7.]

Digitized by Google

be deficient in goodness toward us, or unwilling to help us; or we must apprehend him impotent, and unable to perform what he would, and what he hath promised for us, (like those infidels, who said, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?*) which conceits of God are also very unworthy, and injurious to him. SERM. XXXVII. Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20.

2 Gratitude requireth of us this duty: for we having no right or title to any thing; all that we have coming from God's pure bounty; he having upon us all (whatever our condition comparatively is, or may seem to us) freely conferred many great benefits, common to all men among us, (our being, life, reason, capacity of eternal happiness, manifold spiritual blessings, incomparably precious and excellent,) we in all reason should be thankful for these, without craving more, or complaining for the want of other things[1]. Whereas also all events, how cross soever to our sensual conceits or appetites, are by God designed and dispensed for our good, gratitude requireth that we should thank God for them, and not murmur against them.

Surely if, instead of rendering God thanks for all the excellent gifts which he most liberally (without any previous obligation to us, or desert of ours) hath bestowed on us, and continueth to bestow, we fret, and quarrel, that he doth not in smaller matters seem to cocker us, we are extremely ingrateful and disingenuous toward him. If any great person here should freely bestow on

[1] Iniquus est, qui muneris sui arbitrium danti non relinquit; avidus, qui non lucri loco habet quod accepit, sed damni, quod reddidit.—Sen. Consol. ad Polyb. cap. XXIX. [2.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

us gifts of huge value, (high preferment or much wealth,) but with good reason, as we might presume, should withhold from us some trifle that we fancy or dote on, should we not be very unworthy, if we should take it ill and be angry with him for that cause? The case is plainly the same: God hath in the frankest manner bestowed on us innumerable and inestimable goods, in comparison whereto, any comfort or convenience of our state here is very trivial and despicable: are we not therefore very ingrateful, if we heinously resent the want of any such things; if, upon any such account, we disgust his providence? Do we not deal, beyond all expression, unworthily with God, in so much undervaluing the goods which he hath given us, or doth offer us, and hath put in our reach? He hath made us capable of the greatest goods imaginable, and faithfully upon easy terms proffereth them to us; he even tendereth himself (himself, the immense and all-comprehending good, the fountain of all joy and bliss) to be fully enjoyed by us: his wisdom he offereth, to instruct and guide us; his power, to protect and guard us; his fulness, to supply us; his goodness, to comfort us; he offereth his love and favour to us, in having which, we virtually and in effect have all things; becoming thereby, in the highest degree, rich and honourable and happy: and is it not then outrageous unworthiness to prize any other thing (any petty accommodation of this transitory life, any pitiful toy here) so much, as to be displeased for the want thereof; as if all this were not enough to satisfy our needs, or satiate our desires; as if, notwithstanding all these immense effusions (yea as it

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

were profusions) of bounty upon us, we could be indigent or unhappy? *Shall we,* to use that holy and most ingenuous consideration of Job, *receive so much good from the bountiful hand of God, and shall we not contentedly receive or bear so small evils from him?* Evils, indeed, in name and to gross sense, but not so in reality, not so in effect, at least not so in God's design[k]; but rather things very convenient and profitable for us; which is another aggravation of our ingratitude; for Job ii. 10.

Are we not also very ingrateful in misapprehending and disliking that, which God doeth out of very gracious intentions toward us[l]; in loathing his fatherly and friendly dispensations; the fatherly chastisements and friendly disciplines, which he unwillingly is forced (is, I say, forced by his own great love and by our pressing needs) to inflict or impose upon us? Surely our ill opinion of, or despising, as the Wise Man calleth it, these unpleasant blessings is no small fault; neither will our not discerning (out of affected dulness and stupid pravity not discerning) the wisdom of God's methods, and the wholesomeness of the means he useth to better us, excuse us from foul ingratitude. Prov. iii. 11.

3 Again, upon many accounts, reason further dictateth in respect to God, that we should be content: because it is most reasonable to acquiesce in God's choice of our state, he being infinitely more wise than we, and infinitely better under-

[k] Εὐχαριστῶ σοι, ὦ Πάτερ, ποιητὰ τῶν σῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ παιδευτὰ, ὅτι καὶ ἄκοντας εὖ ποιεῖς, &c. said Philagrius in a grievous disease.—Greg. Naz. [Ep. XXXIV. Opp. Tom. II. p. 31 B.]

[l] Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὸ μὴ πάσχειν οὐκ ἔχω, τοῦτό γε τῷ πάσχειν παρακερδαίνω, τὸ φέρειν, καὶ τὸ εὐχαριστεῖν.—Greg. Naz. de se. [Ep. XXXVI. Tom. II. p. 32 A.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

standing what is good for us than we can do[m]; because he is well affected to us, and more truly loveth us than we do ourselves[n]; because he hath a just right, and irresistible power to dispose of us, the which (whatever we can do, however we resent it) he will effectually make use of; whence it is extremely foolish to be discontent: foolish it is to be dissatisfied with the results of his wisdom, adhering to our vain apprehensions; foolish to distrust his goodness in compliance with our fond self-love; foolish to contest his unquestionable right and uncontrollable power, having nothing but mere impotency to oppose against them; no less than downright madness it is to fret and fume at that which we can nowise help[o], to bark at that which lodgeth in heaven so far high above us, to solicit deaf necessity with our ineffectual wailings; for if we think that our displeasure will affect God, that our complaints will incline him to alter our condition or comply with our wishes, we do conceit vainly, and without any ground; sooner may we, by our imagination, stop the tides of the sea, or turn the streams of rivers backward; sooner, by our cries, may we stay the sun, and change all the courses of the stars, than by our passionate resentments or moanful clamours we can check[p] the cur-

[m] Εὔχετο πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἁπλῶς τἀγαθὰ διδόναι, ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς κάλλιστα εἰδότας, ὁποῖα ἀγαθά ἐστι.—Xenoph. de Socr. [Mem. I. 3. 2.]

[n] Carior est illis homo, quam sibi.
[Juv. Sat. X. 350.]

[o] Ἐάν τε κλαίῃς ἄν τε μή, πορεύσεται.
Philemon. [Frag. Sard. p. 380. Ed. Meinek.]

[p] Οὐ γάρ τις πρῆξις πέλεται κρυεροῖο γόοιο.
Hom. Il. XXIV. [524.]

Σὺ δ' εἶκ' ἀνάγκῃ, καὶ θεοῖσι μὴ μάχου.
Eurip. [Frag. Incert. XXX. 1.]

Digitized by Google

rent of affairs, or alter that state of things which is by God's high decree established: discontented behaviour will rather fasten our condition, or remove it into a worse place; as it highly doth offend God, and increaseth our guilt, so it moveth God to continue, and to augment our evils. Thus lifting up our eyes to heaven, and considering the reference our disposition and demeanour hath to God, will induce us to bear our case contentedly. SERM. XXXVII.

II. Again, reflecting upon ourselves, we may observe much reason to be content with our state; in whatever capacity we look upon ourselves, it in reason becometh us, we in duty are obliged to be so. Lam. iii. 39.

As men and creatures, we naturally are indigent and impotent; we have no just claim to any thing, nor any possession maintainable by our power; all that we have, or can have, cometh from most pure courtesy and bounty; wherefore how little soever is allowed us, we have no wrong done us, nor can we justly complain thereat: such beggars as we are, must not pretend to be choosers; if any thing be given us, we may be glad, we should be thankful. It is for those who have a right and a power to maintain it, to resent and expostulate, if their due be withheld: but for us, that never had any thing which we could call our own; that have no power to get or keep any thing; for us, that came into the world naked and defenceless, that live here in continual, absolute, and arbitrary dependence for all our livelihood and subsistence, to contest with him that maintaineth us, or to complain of his dealing, is ridiculously absurd and vain.

Upon a moral account we have less reason to

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

challenge ought, or to complain of any thing; for we deserve nothing but evil: if we rightly esteem and value ourselves, any thing will seem good enough for us, any condition will appear better than we deserve: duly examining the imperfections and infirmities of our nature, the disorder and depravedness of our hearts, the demeanours and enormities of our lives, we cannot but apprehend that we are even unworthy of the crumbs which fall from our Master's table; we cannot but acknowledge with the good Patriarch, that we are less than the least of God's mercies. Considering our natural unworthiness, we shall see that we deserve not so much as those common benefits which all men enjoy, and without which we cannot subsist; so that, in regard to them, we shall be ready to acknowledge with the Psalmist, *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him; or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!* Trying our hearts and examining our ways, we shall soon discover it to be abundant mercy, that we are not utterly deprived of all good things, stript of all comforts, yea, dispossessed of our very being and life itself; that we are obliged to acknowledge, with those in the Lamentations, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* Were we far better than we are, yet it would not become us to contest with him, to whose disposal and judgment we are subject; as Job teacheth us: *Behold,* saith he, *God taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? If he will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers*[q] *do stoop under*

Matt. xv. 27.

Gen. xxxii. 10.

Ps. cxliv. 3. Job vii. 17.

Lam. iii. 22.

Job ix. 12—15.

[q] Κήτη. LXX.

Digitized by Google

him. How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him? Whom, though I were righteous, I would not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge: but for us, men so unrighteous and guilty, to debate with, to question the proceedings of our Judge, it is much more unseemly. SERM. XXXVII.

Nothing can be more absurd, than for men so deeply indebted, than for sinners so very obnoxious to wrath, to be aggrieved in any state: shall we, who are conscious to ourselves of so many great sins against our God; who, by wilful transgressions or slothful neglects, have so much affronted and offended him; who have so little requited his love, and so much abused his patience; who have borne so little fruit, and rendered him so little service; shall we be angry that our humour is not pleased in all things? Shall we affect to swim in plenty, to wallow in pleasure, to bask ourselves in ease; to be fed with dainties, to be gaily clothed, to flourish in a brave and splendid condition, to be worshipped and honoured; who deserve not the meanest competence or lowest respect, to whom it is a great favour that we are permitted to subsist, whom strict justice would often have detruded into utter misery and disconsolateness? It is not surely for such persons to be dissatisfied with any thing in this world, but to bless God's exceeding mercy that they abide there on this side of the bottomless pit; it is their part, with most submissive patience, to bear whatever is inflicted on them, humbly saying with him in the Prophet, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* Mic. vii. 9. Seeing, whatever our crosses or sufferings be, we

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

cannot but confess to God, with those in Ezra, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve;* being gainers upon the matter, having so much of our debt remitted in effect; being, in comparison to what was due to us, very tolerably, yea very favourably dealt with, why should we be dissatisfied? If in such cases men should deal so favourably with us, we should be much pleased, and ready to thank them; why then should we take it ill of God, when he, even in his hardest proceedings against us, expresseth so much indulgence and mercy?

Ezra ix. 13.

If we must be displeased, and lust to complain, we have reason much rather to accuse ourselves, than to exclaim at Providence; to bewail our sins, than to deplore our fortune; for our evils are not indeed so much the voluntary works of God, *Who doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men,* as the natural products of our sins[r], which we do wilfully commit: it is, as the Prophet speaketh, our sins that withhold good things from us, and bring evil things upon us: *Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.* We make adversity necessary, or expedient for us, then we cry out upon it: we labour in planting, but cannot brook the fruit of our doings; we, like prodigals, fling away our estate in wanton profusions, then complain of want; we affect and choose the causes, but loathe and cannot abide the certain consequences; so fond in our conceits, so perverse are we in our affections: *Wherefore doth the living man complain for the*

Lam. iii. 33.

Jer. v. 25.

Ps. cvii. 17.

Jer. vi. 19; xvii. 10; xxi. 14; xxxii. 19.

Lam. iii. 39.

[r] Αὐθαίρετα πήματα. [Carm. Pythag. 54.]

Digitized by Google

punishment of his sins? so well might the prophet demand and expostulate.

We may further, looking on ourselves, consider ourselves as servants to God, or rather as slaves, absolutely subject to his disposal; and shall any servants, shall a mere slave presume to choose his place, or determine his rank in the family? Shall he appoint to himself what office he will discharge, what garb he shall go in, what diet he must have; what he will do, and how he shall be accommodated? Is it not fit that all these things should be left to our Master's discretion and pleasure? It is most reasonable that we should thoroughly acquiesce in his determination: even a Pagan philosopher could teach us that this is reasonable, who thus piously directeth his speech to God; *For the rest use me to what thou pleasest. I do consent unto thee, and am indifferent. I refuse nothing which seemeth good to thee. Lead me whither thou wilt; put on me what garment thou pleasest. Wilt thou have me to be a governor or a private man, to stay at home or to be banished away, to be poor or to be rich? I will, in respect to all these things, apologize for thee with men*[a]; thus did Epictetus say, and such speech well becometh our relation to God: servants should be content with their masters' appointments and allowances; they should not only themselves forbear to find fault with, but be ready to maintain his

[a] Χρῶ μοι λοιπὸν εἰς ὃ ἂν θέλῃς, ὁμογνωμονῶ σοι, ἴσος (σός) εἰμι. Οὐδὲν παραιτοῦμαι τῶν σοι δοκούντων· ὅπου θέλεις ἄγε· ἣν θέλεις ἐσθῆτα περίθες. Ἄρχειν με θέλεις, ἰδιωτεύειν, μένειν, φεύγειν, πένεσθαι, πλουτεῖν; ἐγώ σοι ὑπὲρ ἁπάντων τούτων πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπολογήσομαι.—Epict. Diss. II. 16. [42.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

proceedings against any who shall presume to reprehend or blame them. Especially such servants as we are, who, *After we have done all things commanded us, must acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants;* such as can bring no considerable benefit to our Lord, or anywise advance his state; such as therefore cannot challenge any wages from him more than he out of mere favour is pleased to allow: could we by our labours enrich God, or raise him in dignity, or procure delight to him, it might seem congruous that he should answerably reward us; but as he getteth nothing by us, so we cannot require any thing from him: our best services do, indeed, rather need pardon, than deserve any reward: no man hath lived so well, that he can pretend any thing from God, that he is not, indeed, much behind hand in his accounts with God, having received from God far more of benefit than he can return to him in service: no man, without extreme presumption and arrogance, can offer to prescribe, in what measure, or what manner, God should reward him.

Luke xvii. 10.

Again, if we consider ourselves as the children of God, either by birth or nature, or by adoption and grace, how can we be discontent for any thing? Have we not thence great reason to hope, or rather to be confident, that we shall never want any good thing, (necessary or convenient for us,) that no great evil shall ever oppress us? For is not God hence by paternal disposition inclined, is he not in a manner by paternal duty engaged, in all needful occasions to supply and succour us? Can we, without great profaneness, and no less folly, surmise, that he, which is so immensely good, will be a

Digitized by Google

bad (an unkind, or a neglectful) Father to us? No; as there is no other father in goodness comparable to him, so none, in real effects of benignity, can come near him; so our Lord assureth us: *If ye*, saith he, *being evil, know how to give good things unto your children; how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to his children that ask him?* SERM. XXXVII. Matt. vii. 11.

If we consider ourselves as Christians, we have still more reason to practise this duty: as such, we are not only possessed of goods abundantly sufficient to satisfy our desires; we have hopes able to raise our minds above the sense of all present things; we have entertainments that ever may divert our minds, and fill our hearts with comfort: but we have also an assurance of competent supplies of temporal goods; for, *Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise both of the present life, and of that which is to come:* and, *If we seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us.* It is, indeed, strangely unhandsome for a Christian ever to droop, or to be disconsolate; for a friend of God, and an heir of heaven, to think he wants any thing, or fear that he shall ever want; for him, whose treasure and heart are above, to be so concerned with any thing here as deeply to resent it. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Matt. vi. 33.

Again, if we reflect upon ourselves as rational men, how for shame can we be discontent? Do we not therein much disparage that excellent perfection of our nature? Is it not the proper work of reason to prevent things hurtful or offensive to us, when that may be done; to remove them, if they are re-

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

movable; if neither of these can be compassed, to allay and mitigate them; so that we may be able well to support them? Is it not its principal use to drive away those fond conceits, and to quell those troublesome passions, which create or foment disquiet and displeasure to us? If it cannot do this, what doth it signify? to what purpose have we it? Is not our condition really worse than that of brute beasts, if reason serveth only to descry the causes of trouble, but cannot enable to bear it? All the reasons we have produced, and all that we shall produce against discontent, will, if we are reasonable men, and reason availeth any thing, have this effect upon us.

Wherefore considering ourselves, our capacities, our relations, our actions, it is most reasonable to be content with our condition, and with whatever doth befall us.

III. Further, if we consider our condition, (be it what it will, how poor, how mean, how despicable and forlorn soever,) we can have from it no reasonable ground of discontent.

1 Our condition in this world cannot, if rightly estimated and well managed, be extremely bad or sorrowful; nothing here can occur insupportable, or very grievous in itself; we cannot, if we please, want any thing considerable, and the defect whereof may not be supplied, or supported by far better enjoyments. If we have high opinions of some things, as very excellent or very needful for us, it is no wonder, if we do want them, that our condition is unpleasant to us; if we take other things for huge evils, then, if they be incumbent on us, we can hardly scape being displeased: but if

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

we thoroughly look through such things, and scan them exactly, valuing them, not according to fallacious impressions of sense, or illusive dreamings of fancy, but according to sound dictates of reason, we may find, that neither absence of the former, nor the presence of the latter doth much deteriorate our condition, or render our case deplorable.

We are, for instance, poor: that condition, rightly weighed, is not so very sad[t]: for what is poverty? what but the absence of a few superfluous things, which please wanton fancy rather than answer need[u]; without which nature is easily satisfied, and which if we do not affect we cannot want? what is it but to wear coarse clothes, to feed on plain and simple fare, to work and take some pains, to sit or go in a lower place, to have no heaps of cash or hoards of grain, to keep no retinue, to have few friends, and not one flatterer? And what great harm in this? It is a state which hath its no small conveniences and comforts, its happy fruits and consequences; which freeth us from many cares and distractions, from many troubles and crosses, from many encumbrances, many dangers, many temptations, many sore distempers of body and soul, many grievous mischiefs to which wealth is exposed; which maintaineth health, industry, and sobriety; disposeth us to feed heartily, to move nimbly, to sleep sweetly; which preserveth us from luxury, from satiety, from sloth and

[t] Tert. do Patient. cap. VII. [Opp. p. 144 A.]

[u] [Καὶ συνεχὲς ἐκεῖνα ἀνεφθέγγεται (Σωκράτης) τὰ ἰαμβεῖα·]

Τὰ δ' ἀργυρώματ' ἐστιν ἢ τε πορφύρα
Εἰς τοὺς τραγῳδοὺς χρήσιμ', οὐκ εἰς τὸν βίον.

[Diog. Laert. (Vit. Socrat.) II. v. 9. The lines are Philemon's. Vid. Menand. et Philem. Rell. Ed. Meinek. p. 406.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

unwieldiness[x]. It yieldeth disposition of mind, freedom and leisure to attend the study of truth, the acquist of virtue. It is a state which many have borne with great cheerfulness; many (very wise men) have voluntarily embraced[y]; which is allotted by divine wisdom to most men; and which the best men often do endure; to which God hath declared an especial regard, which the mouth of truth hath proclaimed happy; which the Son of God hath dignified by his choice, and sanctified by his partaking deeply thereof: and can such a condition be very loathsome? can it reasonably displease us?

Ps. x. 14; xxxv. 10; lxviii. 10; lxix. 33; lxxii. 4, 13; cxl. 12; cxlvi. 7; cxlvii. 2. Luke vi. 20. James ii. 5. Issi. lxvi. 2.

Again, thou art, suppose, fallen into disgrace, or from honour and credit art depressed into a state of contempt and infamy? This also rightly prized is no such wretchedness; for what doth this import? what, but a change of opinion in giddy men, which thou dost not feel, which thou art not concerned in, if thou pleasest; which thou never hadst reason much to regard, or at all to rely upon? what is thy loss therein? it is the breaking of a bubble, the sinking of a wave, the changing of a wind, the cracking of a thing most brittle, the slipping away of a thing most fugacious and slippery: what is honour, and fame, but thought? and what more flitting, what sooner gone away than a thought? And why art thou displeased at the loss

[x] Si vis vacare animo, aut pauper sis oportet, aut pauperi similis.—[Sen. Ep. XVII. 4.]

Multis ad philosophandum obstitere divitiæ; paupertas expedita est, secura est.—Id. ibid.

Sæpius pauper et fidelius ridet.—Id. Ep. LXXX. [6.]

[y] Vid. Plut. in Aristid. [Οὐκ ἠθέλησεν, ἀποκρινόμενος, ὡς μᾶλλον αὐτῷ διὰ τὴν πενίαν μέγα φρονεῖν, ἢ Καλλίᾳ διὰ πλοῦτον προσήκει. —Opp. Tom. II. p. 538. Ed. Reisk.]

Digitized by Google

of a thing so very slender and slim? If thou didst know its nature, thou canst not be disappointed; if thou didst not, it was worth thy while to be thus informed by experience, that thou mayest not any more regard it. Is the contempt thou hast incurred from thy fault? bear the consequence thereof patiently, and do thy best by removing the cause to reverse the effect: is it undeserved and causeless? be satisfied in thy innocence, and be glad that thou art above the folly and injustice of those who contemn thee. Let thy affections rather be employed in pity of theirs, than in displeasure for thy own case. Did, let me ask thee again, the good opinion of men please thee? that pleasure was fond and vain, and it is well thou art rid of it: did it not much affect thee? why then dost thou much grieve at the loss thereof? Is not also thy fortune in this kind the same with that of the best men? have not those who have deserved most honour been exposed to most contempt? *But now,* Job could say, *they that are younger than I, have me in derision,—they abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.* And, *I am,* could that great and good king say, *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head:*—and, *We are defamed, we are reviled, we are made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things unto this day,* could the holy Apostles say; and, *He is despised and rejected of men—he was despised, and we esteemed him not,* was said of our Lord himself: and can this condition then in just esteem be so very pitiful or grievous?

SERM. XXXVII.

Job xxx. 1, 10.

Ps. xxii. 6, 7.

1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.

Isai. liii. 3.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

But thou art, perhaps, troubled because thou art wrongfully censured, odiously traduced and defamed, abused by slander or by detraction; which asperseth thee with things whereof thou art nowise guilty, or representeth thee in a character unworthy of thee[z]: be it so; what then? why doth this so much affect thee?

Is not every man subject to these things? are not the greatest men, are not the wisest men, are not the best men, liable to the same? yea chiefly liable, excellency being the special mark of envy and obloquy? Can any good men escape free of them among so many bad men, whose doings as goodness doth reproach, so it provoketh their malignity? Canst thou imagine to pass thy days in so unjust and spiteful a world without incurring such bad usage? can so many vain, so many bold, so many lawless tongues be tied up, or kept within compass of truth or equity? Wilt thou suffer it to be in the power of any man at his pleasure so easily to discompose and vex thee? because he will be bad, shalt thou be miserable[a]? why dost thou not rather please thyself in the conscience of thy endeavouring to deserve and do well: in thy innocence, and clearness from the blame which they impose on thee; in thy having given no cause of such offence and outrage? why dost thou not rather pity their unworthiness and unhappiness, who stoop to so mean and base practices, than fret

[z] Exempl. Jeremiæ. Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. XVI. [Opp. Tom. VII. p. 100.]

Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum, quem mundus oderit. Hier. ad Asellam. [Ep. XXVIII. Opp. Tom. IV. p. II. col. 67.]

[a] Ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἠδίκησαν, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἠδίκημαι.—Theodor. Ep. LXXX. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 952 B.]

Digitized by Google

at them, as bad to thee? They do themselves far more mischief than they can do thee. SERM. XXXVII.

And why dost thou not consider, that, indeed, thou art guilty of many faults, and full of real imperfections, so that no man can easily derogate from thee more than thou deservest: he may indeed tax thee unjustly, he may miss in the particulars of his charge, he may discover groundless contempt and ill-will toward thee: but thou knowest thyself to be a grievous sinner, and it is just that thou shouldst be reproached, (God, for thy humiliation or thy correction, may have ordered him, as David said he might have ordered Shimei, to curse thee;) thou hast therefore more need to be humble in reflection on thyself, than to swell with disdain in regard to his injury. 2 Sam. xvi. 11.

Thou shouldst improve this dealing, and make it wholesome to thee, by taking occasion thence to correct thy real faults, and endeavouring to become truly more worthy; that so thy conscience may be a firm bulwark against all detraction and obloquy: in fine, satisfy thyself by committing thy soul with patience in well doing unto thy Judge, who assuredly will do thee right, will protect thy reputation, and clear thy innocence: his judgment is only worth regarding, be little concerned with any other. 1 Pet. iv. 19.

Again, being disappointed and crossed in the success of their projects, or undertakings, is wont to put men, as they conceive, into a woful case: but why so? why, let me ask thee, who art discontented upon this score, didst thou build much expectation upon uncertainties; didst thou not foresee a possibility that thy design might miscarry? and if

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

so, why art thou not prepared to receive what happeneth? was it not an adventure? why then art thou troubled with thy chance? Is he not a silly gamester, that will fret and fume at a bad cast, or at the loss of a game? Didst thou refer the business to God's disposal and arbitrement? if not, thou deservedst to be crossed, and rather confess thy fault, than complain of thy fortune: if thou didst so, then be consistent with thyself, and acquiesce in his determination: in fine, what is thy loss? 'Tis of thy care and pain:—would it have been much better, that thou hadst been careless or idle?—but hast thou not in lieu of them got some wisdom and experience? hast thou not (if thy attempt was reasonable and worthy) exercised thy wit, thy courage, thy industry? hast thou not (by thy defeat) got an opportunity to express equanimity and patience? if thou so improvest thy disappointment, thou art a gainer by thy loss, thou dost more than conquer by thy defeat: however, since the gain, the credit, the preferment thou didst aim at, and hast missed, are things in themselves of no great value, and such as thou mayest well live without, as other good men have done, thou canst not have much reason to be displeased upon this account, or to reckon thy condition very disastrous.

But friends, will some men say, have been unkind, have been ungrateful, have been fickle and false, have neglected, have deserted, have betrayed me[b]; this is indeed commonly most grievous; yet being scanned will not render a man's condition so lamentable: for such misbehaviour

[b] *It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it, &c.*—Ps. lv. 12.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

of friends is more their calamity than ours[c]: the loss of bad friends is no damage, but an advantage; it is but the loss of a mischief and a trouble: the fewer we come to have of such, the more time we save, the less trouble we meet with, the greater security we enjoy. The kindness we have shewed, the obligations we have put on such, are not quite lost, they will bring the reward due to humanity and fidelity; it will yield satisfaction to us, that, however, we have been kind and faithful to them. The fidelity of remaining true friends may satisfy us: however, if all other friendships should fail, there is one remains, worth millions of other friends, who can never prove unfaithful or inconstant, who never will be unmindful of us, or deficient in kindness toward us.

The death of friends doth, it may be, oppress thee with sorrow[d]. But canst thou lose thy best friend? canst thou lose the presence, the conversation, the protection, the advice, the succour of God? is he not immortal? is he not immutable? is he not inseparable from thee? canst thou be destitute of friends, whilst he stands by thee? Is it not an affront, an heinous indignity to him, to behave thyself, as if thy happiness, thy welfare, thy comfort, had dependence on any other but him? is it not a great fault to be unwilling to part with any thing, when he calleth for it?

Neither is it a loss of thy friend, but a separation for a small time[e]: he is only parted from thee

[c] Jam sibi (pœnas) dedit qui peccavit.—Sen. de Ira, II. 30.

[d] Vid. Sen. Ep. LXIII.

[e] Vid. Greg. Naz. [Πατὴρ, μήτηρ, ἀδελφὸς, οἱ προειληφότες, τί τοῦτό ἐστιν; ἀριθμὸς ἐπαινετῶν ὁδοιπόρων. τούτοις ἀκολουθήσει, καὶ

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

as taking a little journey, or going for a small time to repose[f]: within a while we shall be sure to meet again, and joyfully to congratulate, if we are fit, in a better place, and more happy state; *Præmisimus, non amisimus;* we have sent him thither before, not quite lost him from us[g].

Thy friend, if he be a good man, (and in such friendships only we can have true satisfaction,) is himself in no bad condition, and doth not want thee; thou canst not therefore reasonably grieve for him; and to grieve only for thyself is perverse selfishness and fondness[h].

But thou hast lost a great comfort of thy life, and advantage to thy affairs here; is it truly so? is it indeed an irreparable loss, even secluding the consideration of God, whose friendship repaireth all possible loss? What is it, I pray, that was pleasant, convenient, or useful to thee in thy friend, which may not in good measure be supplied here? was it a sense of hearty good-will, was it a sweet freedom of conversation, was it sound advice or

Θέκλα μετὰ μικρόν.—Ep. CCXXII. ad Theclam. Opp. Tom. II. p. 184.]

[f] Οὐ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν ὁ πάντα ἄριστος ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου φωνὴν, ἀλλὰ καθεύδει ὕπνον τοῦ συνήθους μακρότερον.—Theodor. Ep. LXIX. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 939 C.]

Ἀποδημίαν τοίνυν παρακαλῶ μακρὰν τὴν τελευτὴν λάβωμεν, &c.—Id. Ep. XIV. [Tom. III. p. 908 A.]

[g] Cur ergo doleas si periisse non credis? Cur impatienter feras subductum interim, quem credis reversurum? Profectio est quam putas mortem.—Tert. de Patient. cap. IX. [Opp. p. 145 C.] Cf. Sen. Ep. LXIII.

[h] Impatientia in hujusmodi et spei nostræ male ominatur, et fidem prævaricatur. &c.—Tert. ibid.

Ποῦ τὸ τῆς ἀγάπης ἀγαθὸν, ἑαυτῷ τὰ ῥᾴω διδόντα τῷ πλησίον ἀπονέμειν τὰ προσαντέστερα;—Greg. Naz. [Orat. XVIII. Opp. Tom. I. p. 362 A.]

Digitized by Google

kind assistance in thy affairs? and mayest thou not find those left, which are alike able and willing to minister those benefits? may not the same means, which knit him to thee, conciliate others also to be thy friends[1]? He did not alone surely possess all the good-nature, all the fidelity, all the wisdom in the world, nor hath carried them all away with him: other friends therefore thou mayest find to supply his room: all good men will be ready, if thou art good, to be thy friends; they will heartily love thee; they will be ready to cheer thee with their sweet and wholesome society, to yield thee their best counsel and help upon any occasion; is it not therefore a fond and unaccountable affection to a kind of personality, rather than want of a real convenience, that disturbeth thee? SERM. XXXVII.

In fine, the same reasons, which in any other loss may comfort us, should do it also in this: neither a friend nor any other good thing we can enjoy under any security of not soon losing it; our welfare is not annexed to one man, no more than to any other inferior thing: this is the condition of all good things here, to be transient and separable from us; and accordingly we should be affected toward them.

Fragile fractum est, mortale mortuum est.

But further, it perhaps displeaseth us, that the course of the world doth not go right, or according to our mind; that justice is not well dispensed, that virtue is under hatches, that worth is not considered, that industry is not rewarded, that innocence and modesty are trampled upon; that favour, partiality, corruption, flattery, craft, impudence, do

[1] Vid. Sen. Ep. LXIII.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

carry all before them; devouring all the encouragements due to honest industry: this may be observed, but why should it displease? art thou guilty of contributing to this? then mend; if not, then bear; especially seeing thou canst not help it; for so it hath always been and ever will be in the world, that things never have gone there as the wisest judge, or the best men desire: there have never been good men enough to sway the world; nor will the few good men that are, be so active in promoting public good, as bad are in driving on their private designs. Doth not this course of things necessarily spring from the nature of men, which therefore we should no more be vexed at, than for that a serpent hath poison, or that a wasp hath a sting? we cannot wonder at it, why then should we be strangely affected by it? could any man ever have been pleased, if this were a sufficient cause of displeasure? However the world goes, we may yet make a tolerable shift; God is engaged competently to provide for us; that should satisfy us. God observeth these things no less than we, and he can easily hinder them, yet he thinketh good to suffer them; and shall not we do so likewise? There is in fine appointed a judgment hereafter, when all these things shall be redressed and set straight; when justice and virtue shall triumph, when integrity and industry shall find their due recompense: it is but a moment to that time, and till then we may rest satisfied.

Thus if we do survey and rightly state things, which cause discontent, and seem to render our condition hard and sad, we shall find, that not from the things, but from ourselves all the mischief

Digitized by Google

proceeds: we by our imagination give to the lightest things a weight, and swell the smallest things into a vast bulk; we fancy them very frightful and doleful, then we tremble and grieve at them. Mere names (the names of poverty, of disgrace, of defeat) do scare us, without consulting reason, and considering how little terrible the things are themselves. We follow silly prejudices, judging that highly good, which the vulgar admireth; that very evil, which the weakest sort of men are wont to complain of: hence so commonly doth our case seem grievous. But, in truth, there is no condition so bad, but if we manage it well and wisely, if we bend our mind to comply with it, if we moderate our passions about the accidents thereof, if we vigilantly embrace and enjoy the advantages thereof, may not be easily supportable, yea prove very comfortable to us: it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which do create the trouble, which seemeth adherent to any condition, and embittereth every state; which from any slight occasion doth extund vexation, and translateth every event into disaster. SERM. XXXVII.

2 As there is no condition here perfectly and purely good[k], (not deficient in some conveniences, not blended with some troubles,) so there is none so thoroughly bad, that it hath not somewhat convenient and comfortable therein; seldom or never all good things do forsake a man at once, or all mischiefs together assail him; somewhat usually abideth, which, well improved or wisely enjoyed,

[k] Usque adeo nulla est sincera voluptas,
Sollicitumque aliquid lætis intervenit.—
Ovid. [Met. VII. 453.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII

may satisfy a man, yea render his estate comparable to theirs, who to vulgar eyes appear to be in the best condition: there is in every condition somewhat of good compensating for its evils, and reducing it to a balance with other more plausible states[1]. We are, suppose again, in poverty, (that instance I propound usually, as the most ordinary ground of discontent;) but have we therewith good health? then most rich men may envy us, and reasonably we should not exchange our state with many crazy princes: have we therewith our liberty? that is an inestimable good, which oftentimes the greatest men have wanted, and would have purchased with heaps of gold: have we therein a quiet mind, and a free use of our time? it is that, which wisest men have prized above any wealth, and which the chief men of the world would be glad to taste of: have we a clear reputation? we have then the best good that any wealth can yield, we have more than many can obtain in the most splendid fortune: have we any friends sticking to us? that is more than the richest persons can assure themselves of, to whom it is near impossible to distinguish the friends of their person from the flatterers of their fortune; it is a privilege and solace which princes are hardly capable to arrive at: have we a bare competency, sufficient to maintain our life? we thereby keep our appetites in better compass, and our faculties in greater vigour; we thence better relish all things; we in consequence thereof avoid

Prov. xxvii. 7.

[1] Assuescendum conditioni suæ, et quam minimum de illa querendum; et quicquid habet circa se commodi, apprehendendum est. Nihil tam acerbum est, in quo non æquus animus solatium inveniat.—Sen. de Tranq. An. cap. x. [4.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

the burdens, the diseases, the vices of sloth and luxury: have we further (as, if we are not very bad, we shall in this case assuredly have, humanity disposing all men thereto) the compassion of men? is not this somewhat better than that envy, that ill-will, that obloquy, which usually do attend wealth and prosperity? Why then, if our poor state hath so manifold conveniences, do we so much distaste it? why do we so dwell and pore on the small inconveniences we feel under it, overlooking or slighting the benefits we may enjoy thereby? This, indeed, ordinarily is our folly and infirmity, that the want of any little thing, which we fancy or affect, doth hinder us from satisfaction in all other things: *One dead fly causeth all* our *ointment to stink;* the possession of a kingdom will not keep us from being heavy and displeased, as Ahab was, if we cannot acquire a small vineyard near us; on that one thing our head runs continually, our heart is wholly set, we can think on, we can taste nothing else; the want of that, notwithstanding all our affluence, doth pinch us; our dainties thence do prove insipid, our splendours appear dim, every thing but that is a toy unto us: so capriciously and unaccountably prone are we to discontent.

Eccles. x. 1.

1 Kings xxi. 1, 4.

3 Is our condition, let me ask again, so extremely bad, that it cannot be much worse? Are we sunk to the bottom of all calamity? No surely; God's providence will not suffer, the state of things here can never admit that to be; here are succours always ready against extremities; our own wit and industry, the help of relations or friends, the natural pity and charity of our neighbours, will preserve us from them; especially persons in any measure

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

innocent can never come near them: there will therefore never fail some good matter of content in what remains; a few good things, well improved, may greatly solace us. But, however, let us imagine our case to be the worst that can be; that a confluence of all temporal mischiefs and wants hath arrived, that we are utterly bereaved of all the comforts this world afforded; that we are stripped of all our wealth, quite sunk in our reputation, deserted of every friend, deprived of our health and our liberty; that all the losses, all the disgraces, all the pains which poor Job[m] sustained, or far more and greater than those, have together seized on us; yet we cannot have sufficient reason to be discontent; for that nevertheless we have goods left to us in our hands, or within our reach, far surpassing all those goods we have lost, much outweighing the evils we do undergo: when the world hath done its worst, we remain masters of things incomparably better than it, and all it containeth; the possession whereof may, and, if we be wise, will abundantly satisfy us. We are men still, and have our reason left behind, which alone, in worth, exceedeth all the treasures of the world; in well using which, and thereby ordering all things for the best, we become more worthy, and more happy than the most fortunate fool on earth; we may therein find more true satisfaction, than any wealth or any glory here can minister: we may have a good conscience left, (the sense of having lived well heretofore, or at least a serious resolution to live well hereafter,) and

[m] Job, who ἐκένωσεν αὐτοῦ (τοῦ διαβόλου) βελοθήκην ἅπασαν κατατοξευόμενος παρ' αὐτοῦ, &c.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Epist. II. [Opp. Tom. VII. p. 61.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

that is a continual feast, yielding a far more solid and savoury pleasure, than the most ample revenue can afford: we may have hope in God, (the author and donor of all good things,) and thereby far greater assurance of our convenient subsistence and welfare, than all present possessions can bestow; we have reserved a free access to the throne of grace, and thereby a sure means (grounded on God's infallible word and promise) of obtaining whatever is good for us; we have a firm right to innumerable spiritual blessings and privileges, each of them justly valuable beyond whole worlds of pelf; we can, in a word, (we can if we please,) enjoy God's favour, which immensely transcendeth all other enjoyments, which vastly more than countervaileth the absence of all other things: of this, by applying ourselves to the love and service of God, we are infallibly capable; of this no worldly force or fortune can despoil us; we having this, our condition cannot be poor, contemptible, or pitiful; it is indeed thereby most rich, glorious, and happy: for how can he be poor, that hath the Lord of all things always ready to supply him; who hath God, as the Psalmist is wont to speak, to be his portion for ever? how can he be despicable, that hath the honour to have the Sovereign Majesty of the world for his especial friend? how can he be miserable, who enjoyeth the fountain of all happiness, who hath the light of God's countenance to cheer him, who hath the consolations of God's holy Spirit to refresh and revive him? what can he want, who, beside his present interest in all the needful effects of God's bountiful love, is an heir of heaven and everlasting bliss? Seeing

Prov. xv. 15.

Ps. lxxiii. 26; xvi. 5; cxix. 57; cxlii. 5.

Ps. iv. 6.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

therefore it is in our power to be religious; seeing we may, if we will, (God's grace concurring, which preventeth us to seek, which never is withheld from those who seek it,) be good Christians; seeing nothing can hinder us from fearing God, or can separate us from his love, neither can any thing render our condition bad or unhappy, really distressed or needy: *O fear the Lord,* saith the Psalmist; *for there is no want to them that fear him: the young lions* (or *the rich,* as the LXX.[n] render it) *do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing;* and, *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing,* saith the Wise Man; and, *The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him,* saith the Prophet; and, *Who is he that shall harm you,* (or *do ill to you,* or *make you worse*[o],) *if ye be followers of that which is good?* saith St Peter; and, *We know,* saith St Paul, *that to them who love God, all things cooperate for good;* and, *Godliness,* saith he again, *with contentedness is great gain;* that is, supposing we have the goods which piety ministereth, although we have nothing more, we are, if we can be content, very well to pass; it is abundantly sufficient for us.

Rom. viii. 39. Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10. Eccles. viii. 5. Ezra viii. 22. 1 Pet. iii. 13. Rom. viii. 28. 1 Tim. vi. 6.

Why then, I pray, are we discontent? what do we groan or grieve for? what is it that we do want? is it the use of reason, is it virtue, is it God's favour? then indeed we have good cause to be displeased; for the want of those things is indeed lamentable: but if we do want them, it is only ourselves that we should complain of; for we may have them if we will, and who can help it if

[n] Πλούσιοι ἐπτώχευσαν.—LXX.

[o] Τίς ὁ κακώσων ὑμᾶς;—1 Pet. iii. 13.

Digitized by Google

we will not? who, if we shall wilfully deprive ourselves of them, will be concerned to mind our complaints? But is it only a lump of trash, or a puff of honour, or a flash of pleasure, that we do need? Is it that we cannot so delicately glut our bellies, or so finely clad our backs, or so thoroughly soothe our fancies, as we could wish, that we so pitifully moan? Is it being restrained in some respects from the swing of our humour; is it that we are not so much regarded, or are slighted by some persons, is it that we are crossed in some design, that so discomposeth and discourageth us? then are we sottishly fond and childish in our conceits and our affections: for proper it is to children, whenas they want no solid or substantial goods, to wail for worthless toys and trinkets; it is for children, when they have not their will in petty and impertinent matters, to cry and lament; children are much affected with every word or little show that crosseth them: if we were (as St Paul chargeth us to be) perfect men, if we had manly judgments, and manly affections toward things, we should not so regard or value any of these temporal and transitory things, either good or evil, as by the want of one sort, or by the presence of the other, to be much disturbed; we should, with St Paul, style any present evil, Τὸ ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως, *A lightness of affliction;* we should with him reckon, *That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glories which shall be revealed in us;* we should, with St Peter, *Greatly rejoice, though for a season we are in heaviness, through manifold trials,* or *afflictions:* we should esteem any condition here very tolerable, yea very good.

2 Cor. xiii. 11. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Rom. viii. 18. 1 Pet. i. 6.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

4 In truth, (if we will not mince the matter, and can bear a truth sounding like a paradox,) usually our condition is then better, when it seemeth worse; then we have most cause to be glad, when we are aptest to grieve; then we should be thankful, when we do complain: that it appeareth otherwise to us, it is because in our taxations of things we do ordinarily judge (or rather not judge, but fancy, not hearing or regarding any dictate of reason) like beasts; prizing things merely according to present sense or show, not examining their intrinsic natures, or looking forward into their proper fruits and consequences.

Adversity (or a state wherein we are not furnished with all accommodations grateful to sense or fancy, or wherein somewhat doth cleave to us offensive to those inferior powers of soul) is the thing which we chiefly loathe and abominate; whereas, in true judgment, nothing commonly is more necessary, more wholesome, more useful and beneficial to us[p]; nothing is more needful, or conducible to the health of our soul, and to our real happiness, than it: it is the school of wisdom, wherein our minds are disciplined and improved in the knowledge of the best things, whence it is termed *παιδεία*, that is, instructive chastisement[q]: so David found it; *It is*, said he, *good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy*

Ps. cxix. 71.

[p] Multoque in rebus acerbis,
Acrius advertunt animos ad religionem.—
Lucret. III. [53.]

Καὶ γὰρ τὸν τύφον περισπᾷ καὶ τὴν ῥᾳθυμίαν ἐκκόπτει πᾶσαν ἡ θλῖψις, καὶ πρὸς ὑπομονὴν ἀλείφει· ἐκκαλύπτει τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων τὴν εὐτέλειαν, καὶ πολλὴν εἰσάγει φιλοσοφίαν. &c.—Chrys. in 2 Cor. Orat. XXVI. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 685.]

[q] *Κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου παιδευόμεθα.*—1 Cor. xi. 32.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

statutes; and our Lord himself ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε, *learned obedience from what he suffered.* It is the academy wherein virtue is acquired and exercised[r]; so God meant it to his people: *The Lord thy God,* saith Moses, *led thee this forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, and prove thee.* So the Wise Man saith, that, *By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better;* and, *That stripes do cleanse the inward parts of the belly.* And, *It yieldeth,* saith the Apostle, *the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.*

Heb. v. 8. Deut. viii. 2. Eccles. vii. 3. Prov. xx. 30. Heb. xii. 11. James i. 3. Rom. v. 3.

It is the furnace of the soul, wherein it is tried, cleansed, and refined from the dross of vain conceits, of perverse humours, of vicious distempers: *When,* saith Job, *he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold;* and, *Gold,* saith the Wise Man, *is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity*[s].

Job xxiii. 10. Ps. lxvi. 10. Ecclus. ii. 5. Wis. iii. 5, 6.

It is the method whereby God reclaimeth sturdy sinners to goodness, engageth them to seek and serve himself: so of the Israelites the Prophet saith, *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them;* so Manasses, *When he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers;* so Nebuchadnezzar, after being driven from his kingdom, *His understanding returned unto him, and he blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him that*

Isai. i. 25; xlviii. 10. Mal. iii. 3. Dan. xi. 35. Isai. xxvi. 16. Hos. v. 15. Ps. lxxviii. 34; cvii. 4, &c. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. Dan. iv. 34.

[r] Miraris tu, si Deus, ille bonorum amantissimus, qui illos quam optimos esse atque excellentissimos vult, fortunam illis cum qua exerceantur assignat?—Sen. de Prov. cap. II. [5.]

[s] Hence πειρασμός (*trial*) is the usual word signifying it. 1 Pet. i. 6, &c.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

liveth for ever; so David himself, *Before,* said he, *I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*

Ps. cxix. 67.

It is that whereby God doth prepare men, and doth entitle them to the blessed rewards hereafter[t]: *Our light affliction,* saith St Paul, *which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;* and, *Ye,* saith St Peter, *greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* Such is the nature, such the use, such the fruits of adversity.

2 Cor. iv. 17.

1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

It is indeed scarce possible, that, without tasting it somewhat deeply, any man should become in good measure either wise or good[u]. He must be very ignorant of himself, (of his own temper and inclinations, of the strength and forces of his reason,) who hath not met with some rubs and crosses to try himself and them with: the greater part of things he must little understand, who hath not experienced the worst part: he cannot skill to wield and govern his passions, who never had them stirred up, and tossed about by cross accidents: he can be no good pilot in matters of human life, who

[t] Ἡ γὰρ τῶν πόνων ἐπίτασις μισθῶν ἐπίτασίς ἐστι, καὶ ἔρεισμα ἀσφαλὲς πρὸς τὸ μηκέτι ἑκόντας ἐκπεσεῖν. καὶ γὰρ τύφον καταστέλλει, καὶ ῥᾳθυμίαν ἀποστρέφει, καὶ φρονιμωτέρους ποιεῖ, καὶ εὐλαβεστέρους ἐργάζεται, &c.—Chrys. ad Stagir. Orat. IX. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 97.]

[u] Nihil—infelicius eo, cui nihil unquam evenit adversi. Non licuit enim illi se experiri.—Sen. de Provid. cap. III. [3.]

Non fert ullum ictum illæsa felicitas.—Id. Ibid.

Digitized by Google

hath not for some time sailed in a rough sea, in foul weather, among sands and shelves: he could have no good opportunity of employing thoroughly, or improving his wit, his courage, his industry, who hath had no straits to extricate himself from, no difficulties to surmount, no hardships to sustain[x]: the virtues of humility, of patience, of contentedness necessarily must be unknown to him, to whom no disgraces, no wants, no sore pains have arrived, by well enduring which, those virtues are learnt, and planted in the soul: scarce can he become very charitable or compassionate to others, who never himself hath felt the smart of affliction, or inconveniences of any distress[y]; for even, as the Apostle teacheth us, our Saviour himself was obliged to suffer tribulation, that he thence might become merciful, and disposed to succour the afflicted. (No wonder, if he that liveth in continual prosperity be a Nabal, churlish and discourteous, insensible of other men's grievances:) and how can he express much piety or love to God, who is not (in submission to God's will, and for his sake) put to suffer any thing grievous, or want any thing desirable[z]? When can he employ any great faith or hope in God, who never hath any visible need of succour or relief from him, who hath other

SERM. XXXVII.

Heb. ii. 17, 18; iv. 15, 16.

1 Sam. xxv. 3.

[x] Quæ latet, inque bonis cessat non cognita rebus,
Apparet virtus, arguiturque malis.—
Ovid. Trist. [Lib. III. Eleg. III. 79.]

[y] Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.—
Virg. [Æn. I. 630.]

[z] Quamvis etiam cum molestiæ in hujus vitæ fragilitate crebrescunt, æternam requiem nos desiderare compellunt. Mundus quippe iste periculosior est blandus, quam molestus, et magis cavendus quum se illicit diligi, quam cum admonet, cogitque contemni.—Aug. Ep. CXLV. ad Anast. [Opp. Tom. II. col. 470 B.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

present aids to confide in? How can he purely delight in God, and place his sole felicity in him, how can he thoroughly relish spiritual things, whose affections are taken up by an affluence of other goods, whose appetites are glutted with enjoyment of other delights? What but deprivation of these things can lay open the vanity, the deceitfulness, and slipperiness of them? What but crosses and disappointments here, can withdraw our minds from a fond admiration, and eager affection toward this world[a]? What but the want of these joys and satisfactions can drive us to seek our felicity otherwhere? When the deceit of riches possesseth us, how can we judge right of things? when cares about them distract us, how can we think about any thing that is good? when their snares entangle us, and their clogs encumber us, how can we be free and expedite in doing good? when abundance fatteneth our hearts, and ease softeneth our spirits, and success puffeth up our minds; when pride, sensuality, stupidity, and sloth (the almost inseparable adherents to large and prosperous estates) do continually insinuate themselves into us, what wisdom, what virtue are we like to have?

Matt. xiii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Luke x. 41. Deut. xxxii. 15. Prov. i. 32; xxx. 9. Hos. xiii. 6. Ps. xxx. 6. Jer. xxii. 21. Amos vi. 1, &c.

Seeing then adversity is so wholesome and useful, the remedy of so great mischiefs, the cause of so great benefits to us, why should we be displeased therewith[b]? To be displeased with it, is to

[a] Ardua res hæc est, opibus non tradere mores.—Mart. [XI. 5, 3.]

Munera ista fortunæ putatis? insidiæ sunt.—Sen. Ep. VIII. [3.]

Viscata beneficia.—Id. ibid.

[b] Gratulari et gaudere nos decet dignatione divinæ castigationis.—O servum illum beatum, cujus emendationi Dominus instat; cui dignatur irasci, quem admonendi dissimulatione non decipit.—Tert. de Patient. cap. XI. [Opp. p. 146 c.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

be displeased with that which is most needful or most convenient for us, to be displeased with the health and welfare of our souls; that we are rescued from errors and vices, with all their black train of miseries and mischiefs; to be displeased, that we are not detained under the reign of folly and wickedness, that we are not inevitably made fools and beasts. To be disgusted with Providence for affliction or poverty, is no other than as if we should be angry with our physician for administering a purge, or for prescribing abstinence to us[c]; as if we should fret at our chirurgeon for searching our wounds, or applying needful corrosives; as if we should complain of the hand which draweth us from a precipice, or pulleth us out of the fire. *Many benefits,* saith Seneca, *have a sad and rough countenance, as to burn and cut in order to healing*[d]: such a benefit of God is adversity to us; and as such with a gladsome and thankful mind should we receive it.

Jude 23.

If with a diligent observation we consult experience, we shall find, that, as many have great cause to bewail that they have been rich, that they have been blinded and corrupted with prosperity, that they have received their consolation here; so many have great reason to be glad that they have been poor, that they have been disappointed, that they

Luke vi. 24. James v. 1. Amos vi. 1, &c.

Οὕτως ὁ ἁμαρτάνων, κἂν μὴ κολάζηται, πάντων ἐστὶν ἀθλιώτερος, καὶ τότε μάλιστα ἄθλιος, ὅταν μὴ κολάζεται, μηδὲ πάσχῃ μηδὲν δεινόν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ε'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 508.]

[c] Τὰ μὲν λεγόμενα κακὰ, τῶν τε νοσούντων ἰατρεῖαι, καὶ τῶν ὑγιαινόντων γυμνάσια.—Simpl. [Comment. in Enchir. Epict. cap. XXXVIII. p. 390. Ed. Schweigh.]

Κρειττων εὐημερίας ἀχαλινώτου νόσος φιλόσοφος.—Greg. Naz. [Ep. XXXIV. Opp. Tom. II. p. 31 C.]

[d] Beneficia multa tristem frontem et asperam habent, quemadmodum urere, et secare, ut sanes.—Sen. de Benef. v. 20.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

have tasted the bitter cup; it having instructed and corrected them; it having rendered them sober and considerate, industrious and frugal, mindful of God, and devout toward him: and what we may rejoice in when past, why should we not bear contentedly when present? why should not the expectation of such good fruits satisfy us[e]? Why should not such a condition, being so plainly better in itself, seem also better unto us? We cannot, if we are reasonable, but approve it in our judgment; why then are we not fully reconciled unto it in our affection?

5 But further: Let our state be, as to quality, what it will, good or bad, joyful or unpleasant, we may yet consider, that it cannot be desperate, it may not be lasting; for there is not any necessary connection between the present and the future: wherefore, as the present, being momentary and transient, can little trouble us, so the future, being unknown and uncertain, should not dismay us. As no man reasonably can be elevated with confidence in a good state, presuming on its duration, (*Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;*) so no man should be dejected for a bad one, in suspicion that it will abide long[f]; seeing neither (considering the fre-

Prov. xxvii. 1.

[e] Horrorem operis fructus excusat.—Tert. Scorp. cap. v. [Opp. p. 491 B.]

Let our condition be what it will, we are the same. It doth not change us in our intrinsic worth or state. It is but a garment about us, or as weather.

Ego, utrum
Nave ferar magna an parva, ferar unus et idem.—
Hor. Ep. II. 2. [199.]

[f] Multa intervenient, quibus vicinum periculum, vel prope admotum, aut subsistat, aut desinat, aut in alienum caput transeat.—Sen. [Ep. XIII. 10.]

Digitized by Google

quent vicissitudes that occur, and the flux nature of all things here) is each of them in itself stable, and the continuance of each absolutely dependeth on God's arbitrary disposal; and as God often doth overturn prosperity, to human judgment most firmly grounded, so he most easily can redress the, to appearance, most forlorn adversity; and he, being especially the helper of the helpless, doth frequently perform it: as, *He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty;* so, *He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: He casteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble and meek: He sendeth the rich empty away, and filleth the hungry with good things. He maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.*

Ps. lxxii. 12; cvii. 9; x. 14. Job xii. 21. Ps. cvii. 40. Isai. xxv. 5. Job v. 11. Isai. ii. 11. Ps. xviii. 27. Ps. cxiii. 7; cvii. 41. Job v. 18. 1 Sam. ii. 7.

Considering therefore the reason of things, and the nature of God, if our state be at present bad or sorrowful, we have more reason to hope for its amendment, than to fear its continuance[g]. If, indeed, things went on in a fatal track, merely according to a blind and heedless chance, or a stiff and unalterable necessity; if there were no remedy from God's providence, or support by his grace to be expected; (although even then there would be no reason to grieve or complain; grief would be unreasonable, because unprofitable, complaint would

[g] Τοῖς γε νοῦν ἔχουσι καὶ σώφρονι λογισμῷ κεχρημένοις, οὐδὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἀδόκητον· οὐδὲν γὰρ τούτων σταθερὸν ἢ βέβαιον· &c.— Theodor. Ep. XIV. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 906 D.]

Sperat infestis, metuit secundis
Alteram sortem bene præparatum
Pectus.—

Hor. Carm. II. 10. [13.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

be vain, because fortune and fate are deaf;) yet our infirmity might somewhat excuse that idle proceeding; but since not a sparrow falleth to the ground, not a hair of our head perisheth; nothing at all passeth otherwise than by the voluntary disposition of a most wise and gracious God; since he doth always strictly view, and is very sensible of our griefs, yea doth in a manner sympathise with them, (according to those pathetical expressions in the Prophets: *His bowels sound,* and *are troubled; His heart is turned within him; In all their afflictions he was afflicted:*) since he further hath by promise obliged himself to care for us, to support and succour us; we have all reason to hope, yea firmly to believe, (if at least we can find in our hearts to hope and to believe,) that we shall, as soon as it is good and expedient for us, find relief and ease; we shall have that Εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν, that *Seasonable succour,* of which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh.

Matt. x. 29, 30. Luke xxi. 18. Isai. lxiii. 9, 15. Jer. xxxi. 20. Hos. xi. 8. 1 Pet. v. 7. Luke xii. 29, 31. Heb. xiii. 5. Matt. vi. 33. Phil. iv. 6. Ps. lv. 22; xxxvii. 5. Heb. iv. 16.

Hope lieth at the bottom of the worst condition that can be: *The poor,* saith Job's friend, *hath hope;* and the rich can have no more; the future being equally close to both; the one can have no greater assurance to keep what he hath, than the other hath to get what he needeth; yea clearly the poor hath the advantage in the case; for God hath more declared, that he will relieve the poor man's want, than that he will preserve the rich man's store: if then we have in every condition a hope present to us, why do we grieve as those who have no hope? having ever ready the best anchor that can be to rest upon, (for in this rolling sea of human affairs there is no firmer anchor than hope,) why

Job v. 16. 1 Thess. iv. 13. Heb. vi. 19.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

do we let our minds be tossed with discontentful solicitudes and fears? why do we not rather, as the Apostle enjoineth, *Rejoice in hope*, than grieve out of despair? why do we not, as the Prophet adviseth, *Hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord?* The effect of so reposing ourselves for the future on God's providence would be perfect content and peace, according to that of the Prophet, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee;* and that of the Wise Man, *A patient man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him.*

Rom. xii. 12. Lam. iii. 26. Isai. xxvi. 3. Ecclus. i. 23.

The truth is, and it seemeth very observable, in order to our purpose, that most discontent ariseth, not from the sense of incumbent evil, but from suspicion, or fear of somewhat to come; although God at present dispenseth a competency of food and raiment, although we are in a tolerable condition, and feel no extremity of want or pain, yet, not descrying the way of a future provision for us, answerable to our desires, we do trouble ourselves; which demeanour implieth great ignorance and infidelity[h]: we think God obliged in kindness, not only to bestow upon us what is needful in its season, but to furnish us with stores, and allow us securities; we must have somewhat in hand, or we cannot trust him for the future: this is that which our Saviour cautioneth against, as the root of discontent and sign of diffidence; *Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof:* an

Matt. vi. 34.

[h] Πολλῆς δὲ μικροψυχίας ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῶν ὕστερόν ποτε συμβησομένων, ἢ μηδὲ ὅλως συμβησομένων, τὴν ἀθυμίαν ἤδη καρποῦσθαι καὶ κόπτεσθαι.—Chrys. ad Stagir. II. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 105.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

advice no less pious, than manifestly full of reason and wisdom: for what a palpable folly is it to anticipate that evil which we would avoid; then, when we earnestly desire to put off sorrow, to pull it toward us; to feel that mischief which possibly shall never be; to give it a being in our fancy which it may never have in nature[1]? Could we follow this advice, never resenting evils before they come, never prejudging about future events against God's providence and our own quiet; constantly depending on the Divine care for us; not taking false alarms, and trembling at things which shall never come near us; not being disturbed with panic fears; no discontent could ever seize upon us: for the present is ever supportable; our mind cannot be overwhelmed by the pangs of a transitory moment.

If we need further encouragement for application of this remedy, we have manifold experiments to assure its virtue: as there are innumerable promises that none who hope in God shall be disappointed; so there are many illustrious examples of those, whom God hath, in remarkable manner and wonderful measure, relieved from wants and distresses, raising them out of deepest poverty, contempt, and worldly wretchedness, into most eminent degrees of wealth and prosperity: *Look*, saith the Hebrew Sage, *into the ancient generations*,

Lam. iii. 25. Isai. xxx. 18; xl. 31; xlix. 23. Ps. xxv. 3; xxxvii. 9; ix. 10. Ezra viii. 22. Amos v. 4. 2 Chron. xv. 2. Ecclus. ii. 10.

[1] Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius, et ante miserias miser. —Sen. [Ep. XCVIII. 6.]

Ne sis miser ante tempus; cum illa, quæ velut imminentia expavisti, fortasse nunquam ventura sint, certe nondum venerint. &c.—Id. Ep. XIII. [4.]

Quid juvat dolori suo occurrere? satis cito dolebis, cum venerit.—Ibid. [§ 9.]

Quoties incerta erunt maria, tibi fave.—Ibid. [§ 12.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

and see; Who hath trusted in the Lord, and hath been ashamed? Or who hath abided in his fear, and hath been forsaken? Or who hath invoked him, and he did overlook (or *despise*) *him?* If we look into those generations, we may there find Joseph, out of slavery and out of prison, advanced to be the chief governor of a most flourishing kingdom: Moses, from an exile and a vagrant, made the redeemer and commander of a populous nation: Job, out of extreme poverty and disgrace, restored to be in wealth and honour twice greater than the greatest men of the East: Daniel, out of captivity and persecution, become president of the greatest monarchy on earth: David, raised out of great meanness to highest dignity, restored out of extreme straits into a most prosperous state; according to those words of admiration and acknowledgment: *O what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me; and yet didst thou turn and refresh me, yea and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again: thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side.* Thus hath God eminently done with divers; thus we may be assured that he will do competently with us, if with the like faith and patience we do, as they did, rely and wait upon him.

Job xlii. 10; i. 3.

Ps. lxxi. 18; lxix. 29; xviii. 36.

6 But further, imagine or suppose, that our condition (so irksome to us at present) will certainly hold on to the utmost; yet consider also that it soon will cease, and change of itself: since we are mortal, our evils cannot be perpetual, we cannot long be infested with them.

As it may debase and embitter all the prosperity in the world, to consider that it is very fading and

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

short-lived; that its splendour is but a blaze, its pleasure but a flash, its joy but, *As the crackling of thorns;* so it should abate and sweeten any adversity, to remember that it is passing away, and suddenly will be gone[k]. Put, I say, the worst case that can be: that it were certainly determined, and we did as certainly know it, that those things which cause our displeasure should continue through our whole life; yet since our life itself will soon be spun out, and with it all our worldly evils will vanish, why are we troubled? What is said of ourselves must in consequence be truly applied to them: *They flee like a shadow, and continue not; They are winds passing and coming not again; They are vapours appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away; They wither like grass, and fade away as a leaf;* they may die before us, they cannot outlive us; our life is but *An handbreadth:* and can then our evils have any vast bulk? *Our age is as nothing,* and can any crosses therein be then any great matter? How can any thing so very short be very intolerable[l]? It is but, Ὀλίγον ἄρτι λυπηθέντες, being, as St Peter speaketh, *A little while yet aggrieved;* it is but, Μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, *A small quantity, whatever it be, of time,* as the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, that *we need patience;* it is but, Τὸ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως, *An affliction for a present moment;* and therefore, as St Paul intimateth, light and inconsiderable, that we are to undergo. We have but a very narrow strait

Eccles. vii. 6.

1 Chron. xxix. 15. Ps. lxxviii. 39. James iv. 14. Ps. xc. 5. Isai. xl. 6.

Ps. xxxix. 5.

1 Pet. i. 6.

Heb. x. 36, 37.

2 Cor. iv. 17.

[k] *I had fainted, if I had not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*—Psal. xxvii. 13.

[l] Omnia autem brevia, tolerabilia esse debent, etiam si magna sint.—Cic. Læl. [cap. XXVII. 104.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

of time to pass over, but we shall land on the firm and vast continent of eternity; when we shall be freed from all the troublesome agitations, from all the perilous storms, from all the nauseous qualms of this navigation; death (which may be very near, which cannot be far off) is a sure haven from all the tempests of life, a safe refuge from all the persecutions of the world, an infallible medicine of all the diseases of our mind and of our state: it will enlarge us from all restraints, it will discharge all our debts, it will ease us from all our toils, it will stifle all our cares, it will veil all our disgraces; it will still all our complaints, and bury all our disquiets; it will wipe all tears from our eyes, and banish all sorrow from our hearts: it perfectly will level all conditions, setting the high and low, the rich and poor, the wise and ignorant, all together upon even ground[m]; smothering all the pomp and glories, swallowing all the wealth and treasures of the world.

It is therefore but holding out a while, and all our molestation, of its own accord, will expire: time certainly will cure us; but it is better that we should owe that benefit to reason, and let it presently comfort us[n]: it is better, by rational consideration, to work content in ourselves, using the brevity and frailty of our life as an argument to sustain us in our adversity, than only to find the end thereof as a natural and necessary means of evasion from it.

[m] Πάντες ἴσοι νέκυες....
.....
Ξυνὸς χῶρος ἅπασι, πένησί τε καὶ βασιλεῦσι.—
Phocylides. [Ποίημα νουθετικόν. 105.]

[n] Ὁ οὖν μέλλεις τῷ χρόνῳ χαρίζεσθαι τοῦτο τῷ λόγῳ χάρισαι.—Plut. ad Apoll. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 195. Ed. Steph.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

Serious reflection upon our mortality is, indeed, upon many accounts, a powerful antidote against discontent; being apt to extirpate the most radical causes thereof.

Is it because we much admire these worldly things, that we so much grieve for the want of them? this will quell that admiration; for how can we admire them, if we consider how in regard to us they are so very transitory and evanid? How can we deem them much worth the having, when we can for so little time enjoy them, must so very soon quite part from them?

1 John ii. 17. 1 Cor. vii. 31. Eccles. i. 3, &c.

How can we dote on the world, seeing, *The world,* as St John saith, *passeth away, and the desire thereof.*

1 Pet. i. 24. Ps. xlix. 12.

How can we value any worldly glory, since, *All the glory of men is,* as St Peter telleth us, *as the flower of the grass;* since, as the Psalmist saith, *Man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish.*

Prov. xxvii. 24; xi. 4. James i. 11. Luke xii. 20. Heb. xi. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 32.

How can we set our heart on riches, considering that, *Riches are not for ever,* nor *can,* as the Wise Man saith, *deliver from death;* that, as St James admonisheth, *The rich man fadeth in his ways;* that it may be said to any rich man, as it was to him in the Gospel, *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee; and what thou hast prepared to whom shall it fall?* How can we fancy pleasure, seeing it is but, Πρόσκαιρος ἀπόλαυσις, *A very temporary fruition;* seeing, however we do eat, or drink, or play, it followeth, the morrow we shall die?

How can we even admire any secular wisdom and knowledge, seeing that it is, as the Psalmist

Digitized by Google

telleth us, true of every man, that, *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish;* particularly it is seen that, *Wise men die* no otherwise than as *the foolish and brutish person perisheth;* that, as Solomon with regret observed, *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are going.*

SERM. XXXVII.

Ps. xlvi. 4.

Ps. xlix. 10.

Eccles. ix. 10; ii. 14.

Do we admire the condition of those, who, upon the stage, do appear in the state of kings, do act the part of wealthy men, do talk gravely and wisely like judges or philosophers for an hour or two? If we do not admire those shadows and mockeries of state, why do we admire any appearances upon this theatre of the world, which are scarce a whit less deceitful or more durable than they?

Is it an envious or disdainful regret at the advantages of others before us (of others perhaps that are unworthy and unfit, or that are, as we conceit, no more worthy and capable than ourselves) that gnaweth our heart? is it that such persons are more wealthy, more honourable, in greater favour or repute than we, that vexeth us? The consideration how little time those slender pre-eminences will last, may (if better remedies want due efficacy) serve toward rooting out that disease: the Psalmist doth several times prescribe it: *Fret not thyself,* saith he, *against evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb:* and again, *Be not afraid when one is made rich, and when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth*

Ps. xxxvii. 1, 2.

Ps. xlix. 17.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII. *he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him:* and he, being fallen into this scurvy distemper, did follow his own prescription,

Ps. lxxiii. 8, 17. *I was,* saith he, *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked—until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end; surely thou didst set them in slippery places—How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!*

Prov. xxiii. 17, 18. So likewise doth Solomon prescribe: *Let not,* saith he, *thine heart envy sinners:* why not? *because surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off:* there will be a close of his undeserved prosperity, and a good success to thy well-grounded hope. So whatever doth breed discontent, the reflection upon our mortal and frail state will be apt to remove it.

It was that which comforted Job, and fortified

Job xiv. 14. his patience under so grievous pressures: *All the days of my appointed time,* said he, *I will wait till my change come:* he would not be weary while he

Gen. xlvii. 9. lived, of his afflictions, because the days of man are few, and full of trouble: if they are full of trouble, and that be a saddening consideration; yet they are few, and that maketh amends, that is comfortable.

7 I add, that it is somewhat consolatory to consider, that the worse our condition is here, the better we may hope our future state will be; the more trouble and sorrow we endure, the less of worldly satisfaction we enjoy here, the less punishment we have to fear, the more comfort we may hope to find hereafter: for, as it is a woful thing to have received our portion, to have enjoyed our consolation in this life, so it is a happy thing to

Digitized by Google

have undergone our pain here. A purgatory under ground is probably a fable; but a purgatory upon earth hath good foundations: God is wont so to order it, that all men, that especially good men, shall undergo it: for, *What son is there whom the father doth not chasten? All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.* Heb. xii. 7. 2 Tim. iii. 12.

8 A like consolation it is to consider, that wealth and prosperity are great talents, for the improvement of which we must render a strict account, so that, *To whom much is given, from him much shall be required;* so that they are, in effect, a burden, from which poverty includes an exemption: for the less we have, the less we have to do, the less we are responsible for; our burden is smaller, our account will be more easy. Luke xii. 48.

9 I shall, in reference to our condition and the nature of those things which cause our discontent, but propose one consideration more, or ask one question: What is it that we do want, or wail for? Is it any good we want, which by our care and industry we can procure; is it any evil that afflicteth us, which by the like means we can evade? If it be so, why then do we not vigorously apply ourselves to the business[o]; why do we not, instead of idle vexation and ineffectual complaints, use the means offered for our relief? Do we like and love trouble? let us then be content to bear it, let us hug it and keep it close; if not, let us employ the forces afforded us by nature and by occasion, to repel and remove it.

[o] Πρᾴως φέρε, μηδ' ἀγανάκτει.
Ἐᾶσθαι δὲ πρέπει, καθ' ὅσον δύνῃ.—
Aur. Carm. [17.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

But if we grieve and moan, because we cannot obtain some good above our reach[p], or not decline some unavoidable evil, what do we thereby but palpably express our folly, and wilfully heighten our woe; adding voluntary displeasure to the heap of necessary want or pain; impressing more deeply on ourselves the sense of them? In such a case patience is instead of a remedy[q], which, though it do not thoroughly cure the malady, yet somewhat alleviateth it, preventing many bad symptoms, and assuaging the paroxysms thereof[r]. What booteth it to wince and kick against our fortune? to do so will inflame us, and make us foam, but will not relieve or ease us: if we cannot get out of the net or the cage, to flutter and flounce will do nothing but batter and bruise us[s].

IV. But further, to allay our discontents, let us consider the world, and general state of men here.

1 Look first upon the world, as it is commonly managed and ordered by men: thou perhaps art displeased, that thou dost not prosper and

[p] Τὸ οὖν τῶν μὴ δυνατῶν ἐφίεσθαι, ἀνδραποδῶδες καὶ ἠλίθιον· ξένου, θεομαχοῦντος, ὡς μόνον οἷόν τε, τοῖς δόγμασιν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ.—Epict. Diss. III. 24. [21.]

[q] Levius fit patientiâ
Quicquid corrigere est nefas.
Hor. [Carm. I. 24. 19.]

[r] Animus æquus optimum est ærumnæ condimentum.
Plaut. Rud. [II. 3. 71.]

[s] Ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ ζημίᾳ χρημάτων, καὶ θανάτῳ, καὶ ἀρρωστίᾳ, καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς συμπίπτουσιν ἡμῖν δεινοῖς ἀλγοῦντες καὶ ἀθυμοῦντες, οὐ μόνον οὐδεμίαν ἀπὸ ταύτης καρπούμεθα παραμυθίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπιτείνομεν τὰ δεινά.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 510.]

Οἱ δὲ τῷ πάθει δουλωθέντες οὐδὲν μὲν κερδαίνουσιν ὀλοφυρόμενοι, ἀνιαρῶς δὲ βιώσονται, καὶ παροξυνοῦσι τῶν ὅλων τὸν κηδεμόνα.—Theodor. Ep. XV. [Opp. Tom. III. 909 B.]

Digitized by Google

thrive therein; that thou dost not share in the goods of it; that its accommodations and preferments are all snapt from thee; that thy pretences are not satisfied, and thy designs fail: this thou dost take to be somewhat hard and unequal, and therefore art grieved. But if thou art wise, thou shouldest not wonder; if thou art good, thou shouldest not be vexed hereat: for thou hast not, perhaps, any capacity for this world; thy temper and disposition are not framed to suit with its way; thy principles and rules do clash with it, thy resolutions and designs do not well comport with prosperity here; thou canst not or wilt not use the means needful to compass worldly ends: thou perhaps hast a meek, quiet, modest, sincere, steady disposition; thou canst not be pragmatical and boisterous, eager and fierce, importunately troublesome, intolerably confident, unaccountably versatile and various: thou hast certain pedantic notions about right and wrong, certain romantic fancies about another world, (unlike to this,) which thou dost stiffly adhere to, and which have an influence upon thy actions: thou hast a squeamish conscience, which cannot relish this, cannot digest that advantageous course of proceeding; a scrupulous humour, that hampereth thee, and curbeth thee from attempting many things which would serve thy purpose; thou hast a spice of silly generosity, which maketh divers profitable ways of acting (such as forging and feigning, supplanting others by detraction and calumny, soothing and flattering people) to be below thee, and unworthy of thee; thou thinkest thyself obliged, and art peremptorily resolved to observe strict rules of justice, of humanity, of

SERM. XXXVII.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

charity, to speak as thou meanest, to do as thou wouldest be done to, to wrong no man anywise, to consider and tender the case of other men as thine own: thy designs are honest and moderate, conducible to (or at least consistent with) the public good, injurious or hurtful to no man; thou carriest on thy designs by fair ways, by a modest care and harmless diligence; nor canst be drawn to use any other, how seemingly needful soever, which do savour of fraud, violence, any sort of wrong or baseness: thou hast an honest pride and haughtiness of mind, which will not let thee condescend to use those sly tricks, crooked ways and shifts, which commonly are the compendious and most effectual ways of accomplishing designs here: thou art, in fine, (like Helvidius Priscus,) in thy dealings and proceedings, *Pervicax recti*[t], wilfully and peevishly honest: such an one perhaps thou art, and such is thy way; and canst thou hope to be any body, or get any thing here? shall such a superstitious fop, such a conscientious simpleton, such a bashful sneaksby, so fantastic a philosopher, pretend to any thing here? No: thou art here *piscis in arido*, quite out of thy element; this world is not for thee to thrive in[u].

This world is for worldlings to possess and enjoy: It was, say the Rabbins, made for the presumptuous; and although God did not altogether design it for them, yet men have almost made it so: they are best qualified to thrive in it, who can

[t] [Tac. Hist. IV. 5.]

[u] Τὸ τοῦ ἤθους γαληνόν τε καὶ ἄτεχνον, καὶ πρὸς τὰς τοῦ βίου στροφὰς ταύτας ἀνεπιτήδειον.—Greg. Naz. [Ep. CLXXVIII. Opp. Tom. II. p. 146 A.]

Digitized by Google

lustily bustle and scramble[x]; who can fiercely swagger and huff; who can fawn; who can wind and wriggle like a serpent; who can finely cog and gloze; who can neatly shuffle and juggle; who can shrewdly overreach and undermine others; those slippery, wily artists, who can veer any whither with any wind; those men of impregnable confidence, who can insist upon any pretences: who can be indefatigably and irresistibly urgent, nor will be repulsed or baffled by any means; those who have a temper so lax and supple, that they can bend it to any compliance advantageous to them; who have a spirit so limber, that they can stretch it any whither; who have face enough, and conscience little enough to do any thing; who have no certain principles, but such as will sort with their interests[y]; no rules but such Lesbian and leaden ones, that easily may be accommodated to their purposes; whose designs all tend to their own private advantage, without any regard to the public, or to the good of others; who can use any means conducible to such designs, boggling at nothing which serveth their purpose; not caring what they say, be it true or false; what they do, be it right or wrong, so it seem profitable: this is called wisdom, prudence, dexterity, ability, knowledge of men, and of the world, and I know not what beside; in the scripture, the wisdom of the world, and of the flesh, craft, guile, deceit[z], &c. For such

SERM. XXXVII.

[x] Quod facillimum factu est, pravus et callidus, bonos et modestos anteibat.—Tac. Hist. I. [87.]

[y] Ἐφιάλτης, στρατηγοῦ ὀνειδίσαντος αὐτῷ τινος τὴν πενίαν, Τὸ δὲ ἕτερον, ἔφη, διὰ τί οὐ λέγεις, ὅτι δίκαιός εἰμι;—Elian. Hist. Var. XIII. 39. [Tom. II. p. 913.]

[z] Ἡ κυβεία τῶν ἀνθρώπων.—Eph. iv. 14.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

persons it is to flourish in this world: *Behold, these,* saith the Psalmist, *are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, and who increase in riches; they are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish:* they it is who love the world, who seek it, who study and labour for it, who spend all their time, and employ all their care about it; and is it not fit they should have it? Is it not a pity they should miss it? Is it not natural that they who sow to the flesh should reap from the flesh? Should not they who use the proper means obtain the end? Should not they arrive at the place, who proceed in the direct road thither?

Ps. lxxiii. 12, 5, 7.

1 John ii. 16.

Gal. vi. 8.

But for thee, who canst not find in thy heart to use the means, why dost thou hope to compass the end, or grieve for not attaining it? Why dost thou blend and jumble such inconsistencies together, as the eager desires of this, and the hopes of another world? It becometh not such a gallant to whine and pule. If thou wilt be brave, be brave indeed; singly, and thoroughly; be not a double-hearted mongrel; think not of satisfying thy mind, and driving on other interests together; of enjoying the conceit of being an honest man, with the design of being a rich or great man; of arriving to the happiness of the other world, and attaining prosperity in this. Wouldest thou enjoy both these? what conscience is there in that? Leave rather this world unto those who are more fit for it, who seem better to deserve it, who venture so much, and take such pains for it; do not go to rob them of this slender reward; but with content see them

Digitized by Google

to enjoy the fruits of their labour and hazard: be thou satisfied with the consequences of thy virtuous resolutions and proceedings: if it be worth thy while to live innocently, modestly, and conscientiously, do it, and be satisfied; spoil not thine expectations by repining at the want of those things, which thy circumstances render incompatible with them: follow effectually the holy patriarchs and apostles, who, without regret, forsook all, and cheerfully went thither, whither conscience and duty called them: if thou art not willing to do so, why dost thou pretend to the same principles, or hope for the like rewards? But, leaving the consideration of the world as man hath made it; SERM. XXXVII.

2 Consider that this world is not, in its nature, or design, a place of perfect ease and convenience, of pure delight and satisfaction[a]. What is this world but a region of tumult and trouble; a theatre of vanity and disasters; the kingdom of care, of fear, of grief and pain; of satiety, of disappointment, of regret and repentance? We came not hither to do our will, or enjoy our pleasure; we are not born to make laws for ourselves[b], or to pick our condition here: no, this world is a place of banishment from our first country, and the original felicity we were designed to; this life is a state of travel toward another better country, and seat of rest; and well it is, in such cases, (well it is, I say, for us, as exiles and travellers,) if we can find any tolerable accommodation, if we can make any hard shift: it Heb. xi. 16.

[a] Εἶπεν ὁ Ἰωβ, (vii. 1) ὅτι πειρατήριόν ἐστιν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ γῆς.—Chrys. ad Stagir. II. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 106.]

[b] Οὐ γὰρ νομοθετήσοντες πάρεσμεν εἰς τὸν βίον, &c.—Plut. ad Apollon. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 193. Ed. Steph.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

should not be strange to us, if in this our peregrination we do meet with rough passages, foul ways, hard lodging, scant or coarse fare; if we complain of such things, we do not surely consider where we are, whence we came, whither we are going; we forget that we are the sons of Adam, the heirs of sin and sorrow, who have forfeited our rest and joy upon earth; we consider not, how unavoidable the effects are of that fatal condemnation and curse, which followed our first transgression; we mind not that the perfection and purity of the blessings we have lost is not to be found on this side the celestial paradise. This world is purposely made somewhat unpleasant to us[c], lest we should over much delight in it, be unwilling to part with it, wish to set up our rest here, and say, *Bonum est esse hic, It is good for us to be here.*

Matt. xvii. 4.

This life is a state of probation and exercise, like to that (which prefigured and represented it) of God's people in the wilderness, wherein God leadeth us through many difficulties and hazards, in many wants and hardships, to humble and prove us, in order to the fitting us for another more happy state[d].

Deut. viii. 23.

No temptation therefore (or *affliction*) *can seize upon us, but such as is human*[e]; that is, such as is natural and proper to men: it is the consideration

1 Cor. x. 13.

[c] Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐπίπονον φύσει, καὶ μοχθηρὸν ἡμῶν τὸν βίον κατεσκεύασεν, ἵνα ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνταῦθα συνωθούμενοι θλίψεως, ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν μελλόντων λάβωμεν· εἰ γὰρ νῦν, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ς'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 504.]

[d] Λογίζεσθαι χρὴ, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τῶν ἐπάθλων καὶ τῶν στεφάνων καιρὸς, ὁ μέλλων ἐστὶν αἰών· τῶν δὲ παλαισμάτων καὶ τῶν ἱδρώτων, ὁ παρών.—Id. ad Stagir. II. [Tom. VI. p. 106.]

[e] Πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος.—1 Cor. X. 13.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

which St Paul useth, to comfort and support us in troubles; and a plainly good one it is: for seeing, *Man*, as Eliphaz saith, *is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;* that nothing is more natural to any thing, than trouble is to us[f]; if we are displeased therewith, we are in effect displeased that we are men; it implieth that we gladly would put off our nature, and cease to be ourselves[g]; we grieve that we are come to live in this world; and as well might we be vexed that we are not angels, or that we are not yet in heaven, which is the only place exempt from inconveniences and troubles, where alone there is no sorrow, no clamour, no pain.

Job v. 7.

Rev. xxi. 4.

3 It hath always been, and it will ever be, an universal complaint and lamentation, that the life of man and trouble are individual companions, continually and closely sticking one to the other[h]; that life and misery are but several names of the same thing; that our state here is nothing else but a combination of various evils, (made up of cares, of labours, of dangers, of disappointments, of discords, of disquiets, of diseases, of manifold pains and sorrows;) that all ages, from wailing infancy

[f] Ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c.—Ecclus. xl. 1. (LXX.)

Vid. Max. Tyr. Diss. xxv. p. 244. [Diss. xli. p. 484. et seqq. Ed. Davis.]

[g] It was the doom of man to eat his bread in sorrow all the days of his life.—Gen. iii. 17.

All is vanity and vexation of spirit.—Eccles. i. 14.

[h] Οὐ βίος ἀληθῶς ὁ βίος, ἀλλὰ συμφορά.—
Eurip. [Alcest. 802.]

Βίος γὰρ ὄνομ' ἔχει, πόνος δ' ἔργῳ πέλει.—
Id. [Frag. Inc.]

Quid est autem diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?—Aug. [Serm. lxxxiv. Opp. Tom. v. col. 452 d.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

to querulous decrepitness, and all conditions, from the careful sceptre to the painful spade, are fraught with many great inconveniences peculiar to each of them; that all the face of the earth is overspread with mischiefs as with a general and perpetual deluge[1]; that nothing perfectly sound, nothing safe, nothing stable, nothing serene is here to be found: this with one sad voice all mankind resoundeth; this our poets are ever moanfully singing, this our philosophers do gravely inculcate; this the experience of all times loudly proclaimeth: for what are all histories but continual registers of the evils incident to men? what do they all describe, but wars and slaughters, mutinies and seditions, tumults and confusions, devastations and ruins? What do they tell us, but of men furiously striving together, circumventing, spoiling, destroying one another? what do we daily hear reported, but cruel broils, bloody battles, and tragical events; great numbers of men slain, wounded, hurried into captivity; cities sacked and rased, countries harassed and depopulated; kingdoms and commonwealths overturned? what do we see before us but men carking, toiling, bickering; some worn out with labour, some pining away for want, some groaning under pain? And amidst so many common miseries and misfortunes, in so generally confused and dismal a state of things, is it not ridiculously absurd for us, doth it not argue in us a prodigious fondness of self-love heinously to resent, or impatiently to bemoan our particular

[1] Πλείη μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν, πλείη δὲ θάλασσα.— Hesiod. [Op. et Di. 101.]

Digitized by Google

and private crosses[k]? May not reasonably that expostulation of Jeremy to Baruch reach us? *The Lord saith thus; Behold, that which I have built I will break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil on all flesh.* SERM. XXXVII. Jer. xlv. 4, 5.

4 Again, if we more closely and particularly survey the states of other men, (of our brethren everywhere, of our neighbours all about us,) and compare our case with theirs, our condition hardly can appear to us so bad, but that we have many consorts and associates therein; many as ill, many far worse bestead than ourselves. How many of our brethren in the world may we observe conflicting with extreme penury and distress; how many undergoing continual hard drudgeries to maintain their lives; how many sorely pinched with hunger and cold; how many tortured with grievous sickness; how many oppressed with debt; how many shut up under close restraint; how many detained in horrible slavery; how many by the wasting rage of war rifled of their goods, driven from their homes, dispossessed of all comfortable subsistence! How many, in fine, passing their lives in all the inconveniences of rude, beggarly, sordid, and savage barbarism! And who of us have, in any measure, tasted of these, or of the like calamities? Yet are these sufferers, all of them, the same in nature with us: many of them (as reason, as humility, as

[k] Ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes
Nemo recusat.— Sen. Troad. [1016.]

Ideo mihi videtur rerum natura, quod gravissimum fecit, commune fecisse, ut crudelitatem fati consolaretur æqualitas.—Id. ad Polyb. cap. XXI. [1.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII

charity do oblige us to believe) deserve as well, divers of them much better than ourselves: what reason then can we have to conceive our case so hard, or to complain thereof? Were we the only persons exposed to trouble, or the single marks of adverse fortune; could we truly say with the Pro-
Lam. i. 12. phet, *Behold, if there be any sorrow like my sorrow;* we might seem a little unhappy: but since we have so much good company in our conceived woe; since it is so ordinary a thing to be poor and distressed; since our case is, as the poet[1] speaketh, not rare, but commonly known, trite, and drawn out from the heap of lots offered to men by fortune; since pitiful objects do thus environ and enclose us; it is plainly reasonable, humane, and just, that we should without murmuring take and bear our lot: for what privilege have we to allege, that we rather than others should be untouched by the grievances to which mankind is obnoxious? Whence may we pretend to be the special favourites, minions, privadoes, and darlings of fortune? Why may not God well deal with us as he doth with other men? what grounds have we to challenge, or to expect, that he should be partial toward us? why should we imagine that he must continually do miracles in our behalf, causing all those evils, which fall upon our neighbours all about, to skip over us, bedewing
Judges vi. 37. us, like Gideon's fleece, with plenty and joy, while

[1] Nec rara videmus,
Quæ pateris. Casus multis hic cognitus ac jam
Tritus, et e medio fortunæ ductus acervo.—
Juv. Sat. XIII. 8.
Ten', O delicias! extra communia censes
Ponendum? &c.—
Id. ibid. 140.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

Dan. iii. 25.

all the earth beside is dry; causing us, like the three children, to walk in this wide furnace, unscorched and unsinged by the flames encompassing us? Are we not men framed of the same mould, are we not sinners guilty of like offences, with the meanest peasant, the poorest beggar, the most wretched slave? if so, then a parity of fortune with any men doth become us, and may be due to us; then it is a perverse and unjust frowardness to be displeased with our lot: we may, if we please, pity the common state of men, but we cannot reasonably complain of our own; doing so plainly doth argue, that we do unmeasurably over prize and over love ourselves. When once a great king did excessively and obstinately grieve for the death of his wife, whom he tenderly loved, a philosopher, observing it, told him, that he was ready to comfort him by restoring her to life, supposing only that he would supply what was needful toward the performing it. The king said, he was ready to furnish him with any thing. The philosopher answered, that he was provided with all things necessary, except one thing: what that was the king demanded; he replied, that if he would upon his wife's tomb inscribe the names of three persons, who never mourned, she presently would revive: the king, after inquiry, told the philosopher, that he could not find one such man. *Why then, O absurdest of all men,* said the philosopher smiling, *art thou not ashamed to moan as if thou hadst alone fallen into so grievous a case; whenas thou canst not find one person that ever was free from such domestic affliction*[m]*?* So might the

[m] Ἔτι, ὦ πάντων ἀτοπώτατε, θρηνεῖς ἀναίδην, ὡς μόνος ἀλγεινῷ τοσούτῳ συμπλακείς, ὁ μηδὲ ἕνα τῶν πώποτε γεγονότων ἄμοιρον οἰκείου

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

naming one person, exempted from inconveniences, like to those we undergo, be safely proposed to us as a certain cure of ours; but if we find the condition impossible, then is the generality of the case a sufficient ground of content to us; then may we, as the wise poet[n] adviseth, solace our own evils by the evils of others, so frequent and obvious to us.

5 We are indeed very apt to look upward toward those few, who, in supposed advantages of life, (in wealth, dignity, or reputation,) do seem to transcend or to precede us, grudging and repining at their fortune[o]; but seldom do we cast down our eyes on those innumerably many good people, who lie beneath us in all manner of accommodations, pitying their mean or hard condition; like racers, we look forward, and pursue those who go before us, but reflect not backward, or consider those who come behind us[p]: two or three outshining us in some slender piece of prosperity doth raise dissatisfaction in us; while the doleful state of millions doth little affect us with any regard or compassion: hence so general discontent springeth, hence so few are satisfied with their condition[q], an epidemical eye-

πάθους ἔχων εὑρεῖν;—Jul. Imp. Ep. XXXVII. [Opp. p. 179. This story of King Darius and Democritus the philosopher is given in the Epistle cited.]

[n] Παρηγόρει δὲ τὰ κακὰ δι' ἑτέρων κακῶν.—
Menander. [p. 203. Ed. Meinek.]

[o] Nulli ad aliena respicienti sua placent.—Sen. de Ira, III. 31.

[p] Neque se majori pauperiorum
Turbæ comparet, hunc atque hunc superare laboret.
Sic festinanti semper locupletior obstat,
Ut cum carceribus, &c.—
Hor. Sat. I. [i. 111.]

[q] Inde fit, ut raro, qui se vixisse beatum
Dicat, &c.—
Id. Ibid. [117.]

Digitized by Google

sore molesting every man: for there is no man, of whatsoever condition, who is not in some desirable things outstripped by others[r]; none is so high in fortune, but another, in wit or wisdom, in health, or strength, or beauty, in reputation or esteem of men, may seem to excel him: he therefore looking with an evil or envious eye on such persons, and with senseless disregard passing over the rest of men, doth easily thereby lose his ease and satisfaction from his own estate: whereas if we would consider the case of most men, we should see abundant reason to be satisfied with our own; if we would a little feel the calamities of our neighbours, we should little resent our own crosses, a kindly commiseration of others' more grievous disasters would drown the sense of our lesser disappointments. SERM. XXXVII.

If with any competent heedfulness we view persons and things before us, we shall easily discern, that what absolutely seemeth great and weighty is, indeed, comparatively very small and light; that things are not so unequally dispensed, but that we have our full share in good, and no more than our part in evil; that at worst we are,

Extremi primorum, extremis usque priores[s];

that Socrates had reason to suppose, that, *If we should bring into one common stock all our mishaps, so that each should receive his portion of them, gladly the most would take up their own, and go*

[r] Si vis gratus esse adversus Deos, et adversus vitam tuam, cogita quam multos antecesseris.—Sen. Ep. xv. [9.]

Nunquam erit felix, quem torquebit felicior.—Id. de Ira, III. 30. Vid. ib.

[s] Hor. Ep. II. 2. [204.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

their ways[t]; that, consequently, it is both iniquity and folly in us to complain of our lot.

6 If even we would take care diligently to compare our state with the state of those whom we are apt most to admire and envy, it would afford matter of consolation and content unto us. What is the state of the greatest persons[u], (of the world's princes and grandees,) what but a state encompassed with snares and temptations numberless; which, without extreme caution and constancy, force of reason, and command of all appetites and passions, cannot be avoided, and seldom are? What but a state of pompous trouble, and gay servility; of living in continual noise and stir, environed with crowds and throngs; of being subject to the urgency of business and the tediousness of ceremony; of being abused by perfidious servants and mocked by vile flatterers; of being exposed to common censure and obloquy, to misrepresentation, misconstruction, and slander; having the eyes of all men intent upon their actions, and as many severe judges as watchful spectators of them; of being accountable for many men's faults, and bearing the blame of all miscarriages about them; of being responsible, in conscience, for the miscarriages and mishaps which come from the influence of their counsels, their examples; of being pestered and pursued with pretences, with suits, with complaints, the necessary result whereof is to displease

[t] Ἐνταῦθα γὰρ ἂν τις ἐλκύσειε καὶ τὴν τοῦ Σωκράτους φωνὴν, τὴν ὀλομένην δεῖν συνεισενέγκαι μὲν εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τὰς ἀτυχίας, ὥστε διελέσθαι τὸ ἴσον ἕκαστον, ἀσμένως ἂν τοὺς πλείους τὰς αὑτῶν λαβόντας ἀπελθεῖν. —Apud Plut. ad Apollon. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 184. Ed. Steph.]

[u] Magna servitus est magna fortuna. &c.—Sen. ad Polyb. cap. XXVI. [1.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

or provoke very many, to oblige or satisfy very few; of being frequently engaged in resentments of ingratitude, of treachery, of neglects, of defects in duty, and breaches of trust toward them; of being constrained to comply with the humours and opinions of men; of anxious care to keep, and jealous fear of losing all; of danger, and being objected to the traitorous attempts of bold malecontents, of fierce zealots, and wild fanatics; of wanting the most solid and savoury comforts of life, true friendship, free conversation, certain leisure, privacy, and retiredness, for enjoying themselves, their time, their thoughts, as they think good; of satiety, and being cloyed with all sorts of enjoyments: in fine, of being paid with false coin for all their cares and pains, receiving for them scarce any thing more but empty shows of respect, and hollow acclamations of praise; (whence the Psalmist might well say, *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie;* a lie, for that their state cheateth us, appearing so specious, yet being really so inconvenient and troublesome[x].) Such is the state of the greatest men; such as hath made wise princes weary of themselves, ready to acknowledge, that if men knew the weight of a crown, none would take it up[y]; apt to think with pope Adrian, who made this epitaph for himself: *Here lieth Adrian the*

Ps. lxii. 9.

[x] Personata felicitas.—Sen. Ep. LXXX. [8.]

——Adulandi certamen est, et unum amicorum omnium officium, una contentio, quis blandissime fallat.—Sen. de Benef. VI. 30. Vid. optime disserentem. Vid. et de Clem. I. 19. Et ad Polyb. cap. XXVI.

[y] Nescitis amici, quid mali sit imperare, &c.—Saturn. apud Vopisc. [Hist. Aug. Script. p. 245 E.]

Nihil esse difficilius quam bene imperare.—Diocles. apud Vopisc. in Aureliano. [Ibid. p. 223 E.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

Sixth, who thought nothing in his life to have befallen him more unhappy, than that he ruled[z]: such, in fine, their state, as upon due consideration we should, were it offered to our choice, never embrace; such, indeed, as in sober judgment, we cannot prefer before the most narrow and inferior fortune: how then can we reasonably be displeased with our condition, when we may even pity emperors and kings, when, in reality, we are as well, perhaps are much better, than they?

7 Further, it may induce and engage us to be content, to consider what commonly hath been the lot of good men in the world: we shall, if we survey the histories of all times, find the best men to have sustained most grievous crosses and troubles[a]; scarce is there in holy scripture recorded any person eminent and illustrious for goodness, who hath not tasted deeply of wants and distresses. Abraham the father of the faithful, and especial friend of God, was called out of his country, and from his kindred, to wander in a strange land, and lodge in tents, without any fixed habitation. Jacob spent a great part of his life in slavish toil, and in his old age was, in reflection upon his life, moved to

[z] Hadrianus Sextus hic situs est, qui nihil sibi infelicius in vita duxit, quam quod imperaret.—P. Jovius in Vit. [p. 149. Flor. 1551.]

[a] Consider what calamities great, powerful, glorious men have endured; Crœsus, Polycrates, Pompey, &c.—Sen. de Ira, III. 25. [Quomodo homini pusillo solatium in malis fuit, etiam magnorum virorum titubare fortunam.]

Οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄριστοι πενίᾳ διέζων παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον. (Aristides, Phocion, Epaminondas, Pelopidas, Lamachus, Socrates, Ephialtes.)—Ælian. Hist. Var. XI. 9. [Tom. II. p. 694.] Cf. II. 43. [Tom. I. p. 185.]

Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit.—[Sen. de Prov. cap. III. 5.]

Abel, Noe, &c. Chrys. ad Stagir. Opp. Tom. VI. p. 107.

Digitized by Google

say, that the days of his pilgrimage had been few and evil. Joseph was maligned and persecuted by his brethren, sold away for a slave, slandered for a most heinous crime, thrust into a grievous prison, where, *His feet were hurt with fetters, and his soul came into iron*[b]. Moses was forced to fly away for his life, to become a vagabond in a foreign place, to feed sheep for his livelihood; to spend afterward the best of his life in contesting with an obstinately perverse prince, and in leading a mistrustful, refractory, mutinous people, for forty years' time, through a vast and wild desert. Job, what a stupendous heap of mischiefs did together fall and lie heavy upon him[c]! (*Thou writest bitter things against me,* he might well say.) David, how often was he plunged in saddest extremity, and reduced to the hardest shifts; being hunted like a partridge in the wilderness by an envious master, forced to counterfeit madness for his security among barbarous infidels; dispossessed of his kingdom, and persecuted by his own most favoured son; deserted by his servants, reproached and scorned by his subjects! Elias was driven long to sculk for his life, and to shift for his livelihood in the wilderness. Jeremy was treated as an impostor and a traitor, and cast into a miry dungeon; finding matter from his sufferings for his doleful lamentations, and having thence occasion to exclaim, *I am the man that have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath,* &c. Which of the Prophets were not persecuted and misused? as St Stephen asked. The Apostles were pinched

SERM. XXXVII.

Gen. xlvii. 9.

Ps. cv. 18.

Job xiii. 26.

1 Sam. xxvi. 20.

Lam. iii. 1.

Acts vii. 52.

1 Cor. iv. and vii.

[b] Σίδηρον διῆλθεν ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ.—LXX.

[c] Vid. Chrys. Orat. XXVII. Opp. Tom. V. p. 168; et Orat. X. Tom. VI. p. 107.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

with all kinds of want, harassed with all sorts of toil, exposed to all manner of hazards, persecuted with all variety of contumelies and pains that can be imagined[e]. Above all, our Lord himself beyond expression was a *Man of sorrow and acquainted with grief*, surpassing all men in suffering, as he did excel them in dignity and in virtue; extreme poverty, having not so much as where to lay his head, was his portion; to undergo continual labour and travail, without any mixture of carnal ease or pleasure, was his state; in return for the highest good-will and choicest benefits, to receive most cruel hatred and grievous injuries, to be loaded with the bitterest reproaches, the foulest slanders, the sorest pains which most spiteful malice could invent, or fiercest rage inflict, this was his lot[f]: Am I poor? so, may one say, was he to extremity; Am I slighted of the world? so was he notoriously; Am I disappointed and crossed in my designs? so was he continually, all his most painful endeavours having small effect; Am I deserted or betrayed of friends? so was he by those who were most intimate, and most obliged to him; Am I reviled, slandered, misused? was not he so beyond all comparison most outrageously?

Isai. liii. 3.

Matt. viii. 20.

Have all these, and many more, *Of whom the world was not worthy*, undergone all sorts of inconvenience, *being destitute, afflicted, tormented;* and shall we then disdain, or be sorry to be found in

Heb. xi. 38.

[e] Vid. Chrys. Orat. XCIII. Tom. VI. [p. 864 et seqq.]

[f] Ἐκ γὰρ τῶν πρώτων φύντων ἀνθρώπων μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος καιροῦ, τοὺς τῶν ὅλων ἐσπουδακότας σέβειν Θεόν ἐστιν εὑρεῖν παρὰ τῶν συμβεβιωκότων ἀνθρώπων ἠδικημένους, καὶ πλείστοις ἄγαν περιπεπτωκότας ἀνιαροῖς.—Theodor. Ep. CXXXII. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 1005 B.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

such company? *Having such a cloud of martyrs, let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* Is it not an honour, should it not be a comfort to us, that we do, in condition, resemble them? If God hath thus dealt with those, who of all men have been dearest to him[g], shall we take it ill at his hands, that he, in any manner, dealeth so with us? Can we pretend, can we hope, can we even wish to be used better, than God's firstborn, and our Lord himself hath been? If we do, are we not monstrously fond and arrogant? especially considering, that it is not only an ordinary fortune, but the peculiar character of God's chosen and children, to be often crossed, checked, and corrected; even Pagans have observed it, and avowed there is great reason for it; *God,* saith Seneca[h], *hath a fatherly mind toward good men; and strongly loveth them—therefore after the manner of severe parents, he educateth them hardly,* &c. The Apostle doth in express terms assure us thereof: for, *Whom,* saith he, *the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons—but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all* (that is, all good men and genuine sons of God) *are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.* Would we be illegitimated, or expunged from the number of God's

Heb. xii. 1.

Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8.

[g] Καὶ νῦν, καὶ πάλαι, ἐξ οὗ γεγόνασιν ἄνθρωποι, ἅπαντες οἱ τῷ Θεῷ φίλοι τῷ στυγνῷ καὶ ἐπιμόχθῳ καὶ μυρίων γέμοντι δεινῶν ἐκληρώθησαν βίῳ.—Chrys. in Mart. Ægypt. Opp. Tom. v. p. 522.

Ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς ἤνθουν οἱ δίκαιοι.—Id. in 2 Cor. Orat. xxvi. [Tom. iii. p. 685.]

Καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ἁγίους ἅπαντας οὕτως ἤγαγεν ὁ Θεὸς διὰ θλίψεως.—[Id. ibid. p. 686.]

[h] [Patrium habet Deus adversus bonos viros animum, et illos fortiter amat.] Sen. de Prov. cap. ii. 4.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

true children? would we be divested of his special regard and good-will? if not, why do we not gladly embrace, and willingly sustain adversity, which is by himself declared so peculiar a badge of his children, so constant a mark of his favour[1]? If all good men do, as the Apostle asserteth, partake thereof; shall we, by displeasure at it, shew that we desire to be assuredly none of that party, that we affect to be discarded from that holy and happy society? *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.* It is peculiarly the lot of Christians, as such, in conformity to their afflicted Saviour; they are herein, *Predestinated to be conformable to his image;* to this they are appointed. (*Let no man,* saith St Paul, *be moved by these afflictions; for ye know that we are appointed thereunto:*) to this they are called, (*If when ye do well,* saith St Peter, *and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called,*) this is propounded to them as a condition to be undertaken and undergone by them as such; they are by profession *Crucigeri,* bearers of the cross; (*If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me; Every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution*[k]:) by this are they admitted into the state of Christians[l]; (*By many afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heaven;*) this doth qualify them

John xvi. 20.

Rom. viii. 29. 1 Thess. iii. 3. Phil. iii. 10.

1 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

Matt. xvi. 24; x. 38.

2 Tim. iii. 12.

Acts xiv. 22.

[1] Τέκνον, εἰ προσέρχῃ δουλεύειν Κυρίῳ Θεῷ, ἑτοίμασον τὴν ψυχήν σου εἰς πειρασμόν.—Ecclus. ii. 1.

[k] Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλίψιν ἔξετε.—Joh. xvi. 33.

[l] Quotam partem angustiarum perpessus sum, qui cruci milito?—Hier. ad Asel. Ep. XXVIII. [Opp. Tom. IV. p. ii. col. 67.] Vid. Greg. Naz. Ep. CCXXIII. (ad Theclam.) [Opp. Tom. II. p. 185.]

Digitized by Google

for enjoying the glorious rewards which their Religion propoundeth; (*We are coheirs with Christ;* so that, *If we suffer together, we shall also together be glorified with him: If we endure, we shall also reign with him*[m]:) and shall we then pretend to be Christians, shall we claim any benefit from thence, if we are unwilling to submit to the law, to attend the call, to comply with the terms thereof? Will we enjoy its privileges, can we hope for its rewards, if we will not contentedly undergo what it requireth? Shall we arrive to the end it propoundeth, without going in the way it prescribeth, the way which our Lord himself doth lead us in, and himself hath trod before us? SERM. XXXVII. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 12. Phil. iii. 10.

In fine, seeing adversity is, as hath been declared, a thing so natural to all men, so common to most men, so incident to great men, so proper to good men, so peculiar to Christians, we have great reason to observe the Apostle's advice, *Beloved, wonder not concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as if some strange thing happened to you;* we should not wonder at it as a strange or uncouth thing, that we are engaged in any trouble or inconvenience here; we are consequently not to be affected with it as a thing very grievous. 1 Pet. iv. 12.

V. Moreover, considering the nature of this duty itself may be a great inducement and aid to the practice of it.

1 It is itself a sovereign remedy for all poverty and all sufferance[n]; removing them, or

[m] It is a privilege of Christians, in favour bestowed on them; Ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη.—Phil. i. 29. *Your glory.*—Eph. iii. 13. Ὑπομονῆς ἔχετε χρείαν.—Heb. x. 36. Faith and patience are consorts.—Heb. vi. 12; Rev. xiii. 10.

[n] Ἔστι δὲ πορισμὸς μέγας ἡ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας.—1 Tim. vi. 6.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

allaying all the mischief they can do us. It is well and truly said by St Austin[o], *Interest non qualia, sed qualis quis patiatur; It is no matter what, but how disposed a man suffereth:* the chief mischief any adversity can do us is to render us discontent; in that consisteth all the sting and all the venom thereof; which thereby being voided, adversity can signify nothing prejudicial or noxious to us; all distraction, all distemper, all disturbance from it is by the antidote of contentedness prevented or corrected. He that hath his desires moderated to a temper suitable with his condition, that hath his passions composed and settled agreeably to his circumstances, what can make any grievous impression on him, or render him anywise miserable? he that taketh himself to have enough, what doth he need? he that is well pleased to be as he is, how can he be better? what can the largest wealth, or highest prosperity in the world, yield more or better than satisfaction of mind? he that hath this most essential ingredient of felicity, is he not thence in effect most fortunate? is not at least his condition as good as that of the most prosperous[p]?

2 As good, do I say? yea, is it not plainly much better than can arise merely from any secular prosperity? for satisfaction springing from rational consideration and virtuous disposition of mind, is indeed far more precious, more noble and worthy,

[o] De Civ. Dei. I. 8. [Opp. Tom. VII. col. 8 E.]

[p] Cui enim paupertate bene convenit, dives est.—Sen. Ep. II. [5.] Nemo enim aliorum sensu miser est, sed suo. Et ideo non possunt cujusquam falso judicio esse miseri, qui sunt vere sua conscientia beati... Nulli beatiores sunt, quam qui hoc sunt quod volunt.—Salv. de Gubern. Dei, Lib. I. [p. 6. Ed. Baluz.]

Digitized by Google

more solid and durable, more sweet and delectable, SERM. XXXVII.
than that which any possession, or fruition of worldly goods can afford[q]: Τὸ ἄφθαρτον τοῦ πραέος καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, *The incorruptibility,* as St Peter speaketh, *of a meek and quiet spirit is before God of great price; before God,* that is, according to the most upright and certain judgment, it is the most precious and valuable thing in the world; *There is,* the philosopher could say, *no spectacle more worthy of God,* (or grateful to him,) *than a good man gallantly combating with ill fortune*[r]. Not to be discomposed or distempered in mind, not to fret or whine, when all things flow prosperously and according to our mind, is no great praise, no sign of wisdom, or argument of goodness; it cannot be reckoned an effect of sound judgment or virtuous affection, but a natural consequent of such a state: but when there are evident occasions and urgent temptations to displeasure, when present sense and fancy do prompt and provoke to murmuring, then to be satisfied in our mind, then to keep our passions in order, then to maintain good humour, then to restrain our tongue from complaint, and to govern our demeanour sweetly, this is indeed honourable and handsome; to see a worthy man sustain crosses, wants, disgraces, with equanimity and cheerfulness, is a most goodly sight: such a

1 Pet. iii. 4.

[q] Οὐ γὰρ τὸ ποιῆσαί τι χρηστὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ παθεῖν τι κακὸν, πολλὰς ἔχει τὰς ἀμοιβὰς καὶ μεγάλα τὰ ἔπαθλα. &c.—Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. III. [Opp. Tom. VII. p. 71.] Vid. p. 73.

Οὐδὲν τῆς ἐν ἀλγηδόσιν ὑπομονῆς εἰς εὐδοκιμήσεως λόγον ἴσον. ἡ γὰρ βασιλὶς τῶν ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τῶν στεφάνων ἡ κορωνὶς, αὕτη μάλιστά ἐστι. —Id. ad Olymp. Ep. XVI. [Tom. VII. p. 99.] Vid. ad Olymp. Epp. VI. et III. p. 73. de Josepho.

[r] Ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortis cum mala fortuna compositus.—Sen. de Provid. [cap. II. 6.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

person, to a judicious mind, appeareth in a far more honourable and invidious state, than any prosperous man; his virtue shining in the dark is far more bright and fair: *This*, as St Peter saith, in a like case, *is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God suffereth grief;* if, in our case, (we may say after him,) a man, out of conscientious deference to God's will, doth contentedly undergo adversity, this, God is ready to take for an obligation on himself, and will be disposed in a manner to thank him (or to reward him) for it: this indeed amounteth to a demonstration, that such a person is truly wise and really good: so is the satisfaction of a contented poor man more worthy[s]: and it is no less more sweet and comfortable, than that of any rich man, pleasing himself in his enjoyments; contentedness satisfieth the mind of the one, abundance doth only satiate the appetites of the other; the former is immaterial and sprightly, the complacence of a man; the latter is gross and dull, like the sensuality of a beast; the delight of that, sinketh deep into the heart, the pleasure of this doth only float in the outward senses, or in the fancy; one is a positive comfort, the other but a negative indolency in regard to the mind: the poor good man's joy is wholly his own, and home-born, a lovely child of reason and virtue; the full rich man's pleasure cometh from without, and is thrust into him by impulses of sensible objects.

1 Pet. ii. 19.

[s] Honesta, inquit Epicurus, res est, paupertas læta.—[Sen. Ep. II. 4.]

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ διὰ τὸν Θεόν τι πάσχων μόνον εὐδοκιμεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ἀδίκως τι πάσχων, καὶ φέρων γενναίως, καὶ εὐχαριστῶν τῷ συγχωροῦντι Θεῷ οὐκ ἐλάττων τοῦ διὰ τὸν Θεὸν ταῦτα πάσχοντός ἐστιν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ε'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 505.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

Hence is the satisfaction of contented adversity far more constant, solid, and durable, than that of prosperity; it, being the product of immutable reason, abideth in the mind, and cannot easily be driven thence by any corporeal impressions, which immediately cannot touch the mind; whereas the other, issuing from sense, is subject to all the changes inducible from the restless commotions of outward causes affecting and altering sense: whence the satisfaction proceeding from reason and virtue, the longer it stayeth, the firmer and sweeter it groweth, turning into habit, and working nature to an agreement with it; whereas usually the joys of wealth and prosperity do soon degenerate into fastidiousness, and terminate in bitterness; being honey in the mouth, but soon becoming gall in the bowels. Nothing indeed can affect the mind with a truer pleasure, than the very conscience of discharging our duty toward God in bearing hardship, imposed by his providence, willingly and well. We have therefore much reason not only to acquiesce in our straits, but to be glad of them, seeing they do yield us an opportunity of immediately obtaining goods more excellent and more desirable, than any prosperous or wealthy man can easily have, since they furnish us with means of acquiring and exercising a virtue worthy the most ample fortune; yea justly preferable to the best estate in the world; a virtue, which, indeed, doth not only render any condition tolerable, but sweeteneth any thing, yea sanctifieth all states, and turneth all occurrences into blessings.

Rev. x. 10. Job xx. 20, 22.

3 Even the sensible smart of adversity is by contentedness somewhat tempered and eased; the

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

stiller and quieter we lie under it, the less we feel its violence and pungency: it is tumbling and tossing that stirreth the ill humours, and driveth them to the parts most weak, and apt to be affected with them; the rubbing of our sores is that which inflameth and exasperateth them: where the mind is calm, and the passions settled, the pain of any grievance is in comparison less acute, less sensible.

4 Whence, if others in our distress are uncharitable to us, refusing the help they might or should afford toward the rescuing us from it, or relieving us in it, we hereby may be charitable and great benefactors to ourselves; we should need no anodyne to be ministered from without, no succour to come from any creature, if we would not be wanting to ourselves, in hearkening to our own reason, and enjoying the consolation which it affordeth. In not doing this, we are more uncharitable and cruel to ourselves, than any spiteful enemy or treacherous friend can be; no man can so wrong or molest us, as we do ourselves, by admitting or fostering discontent.

5 The contented bearing of our condition is also the most hopeful and ready means of bettering it, and of removing the pressures we lie under.

It is partly so in a natural way, as disposing us to embrace and employ the advantages which occur conducible thereto: for as discontent blindeth men, so that they cannot descry the ways of escape from evil, it dispiriteth and discourageth them from endeavouring to help themselves, it depriveth them of many succours and expedients, which occasion would afford for their relief; so he that

Digitized by Google

being undisturbed in his spirit hath his eyes open and his courage up, and all his natural powers in order, will be always ready and able to do his best, to act vigorously, to snatch any opportunity, and employ any means toward the freeing himself from what appeareth grievous to him. SERM. XXXVII.

Upon a supernatural account, content is yet more efficacious to the same purpose: for cheerful submission to God's will doth please him much, doth strongly move him to withdraw his afflicting hand, doth effectually induce him to advance us into a most comfortable state: of all virtues, there is none more acceptable to God than patience. God will take it well at our hands, if we do contentedly receive from his hand the worst things: it is a monstrous thing not to receive prosperity with grateful sense, but it is heroical with the same mind to receive things unpleasant: he that doth so, *Ζημιοῦται μὲν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, στεφανοῦται δὲ ὡς φιλόθεος, He suffereth loss as a man, but is crowned as a lover of God*[t]. It is an unreasonable thing to think of enjoying both rest and pleasure here, and the rewards hereafter; our consolation here with Dives, and our refreshment hereafter with Lazarus.

Be humbled, saith St Peter, *under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,* (*ἐν καιρῷ*, when it is opportune and seasonable;) and, *Be humbled,* saith St James, *before the Lord, and he will exalt you*; and, *When,* saith Job's friends, *men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he will save the humble person.* 1 Pet. v. 6. James iv. 10. Job xxii. 29.

[t] Chrys. Orat. LXXXIX. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 842.] Vide ad Stagir. I. et II. Tom. VI. p. 106.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

God with favourable pity hearkeneth to the groans of them who are humbly contrite under his hand, and reverently tremble at his word; *He reviveth the spirit of the humble; He is nigh to the broken of heart,* and *saveth such as are of a contrite spirit; He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds;* he proclaimeth blessedness to the poor in spirit, and to those that mourn, because they shall find comfort and mercy: all which declarations and promises are made concerning those, who bear adversity with a submiss and contented mind; and we see them effectually performed in the cases of Ahab, of the Ninevites, of Nebuchadnezzar, of Manasses, of Hezekiah, of David; of all persons mentioned in holy scripture, upon whom adversities had such kindly operations. But discontent and impatience do offend God, and provoke him to continue his judgments, yea to increase the load of them: to be sullen and stubborn is the sure way to render our condition worse and more intolerable: for, *Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?* The Pharaohs and Sauls, and such like persons, who rather would break than bend, who, being dissatisfied with their condition, chose rather to lay hold on other imaginary succours, than to have recourse to God's mercy and help; those, who (like the refractory Israelites) have been smitten in vain as to any quiet submission or conversion unto God, what have they but plunged themselves deeper into wretchedness?

Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14. Isai. lxvi. 2; lvii. 15. Ps. xxxiv. 18; li. 17; cxlvii. 3. Matt. v. 3, 4.

Job ix. 4. Isai. ix. 13; i. 5; xxvi. 10.

Jer. ii. 30; v. 13.

It is, indeed, to quell our haughty stomach, to check our froward humour, to curb our impetuous desires, to calm our disorderly passions, to suppress

Digitized by Google

our fond admiration and eager affection toward these worldly things, in short, to work a contented mind in us, that God ever doth inflict any hardships on us, that he crosseth us in our projects, that he detaineth us in any troublesome state: until this be achieved, as it is not expedient that we should be eased, as relief would really be no blessing to us; so God (except in anger and judgment) will nowise grant or dispense it; it would be a cruel mercy for him to do it. If therefore we do wish ever to be in a good case as to this world, let us learn to be contented in a bad one: having got this disposition firmly rooted in our hearts, we are qualified for deliverance and preferment; nor will God fail in that due season to perform for us what he so often hath declared and promised; his nature disposeth him, his word hath engaged him to help and comfort us.

These are the most proper inducements unto contentedness, which considering, (in the light of reason and holy scripture,) the nature of the thing suggested unto my meditation: there are beside some other means advisable, (some general, some more particular,) which are very conducible to the production of content, or removing discontent; which I shall touch, and then conclude.

1 A constant endeavour to live well, and to maintain a good conscience: he that doth this can hardly be dismayed or disturbed with any occurrence here; this will yield a man so ample and firm a satisfaction of mind, as will bear down the sense of any incumbent evils; this will beget such hope in God, and so good assurance of his favour, as will supply the want of all other things, and

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

fully satisfy us, that we have no cause to be troubled with any thing here; he that by conscientious practice hath obtained such a hope, is prepared against all assaults of fortune with an undaunted mind and force impregnable; *He will*, as the Psalmist saith, *not be afraid of any evil tidings; for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* Maintaining this will free us from all anxious care, transferring it upon God; it will breed a sure confidence, that he will ever be ready to supply us with all things convenient, to protect and deliver us from all things hurtful; ensuring to us the effect of that promise, by the conscience of having performed the condition thereof: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Ps. cxii. 7; cxix. 6.

Matt. vi. 33.

This was that which supported the Apostles, and kept them cheerful under all that heavy load of distresses which lay upon them; *Our rejoicing is this*, could they say, *the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity—we have had our conversation in this world.*

2 Cor. i. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 16. Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16.

It is the want of this best pleasure, that both rendereth the absence of all other pleasures grievous, and their presence insipid: had we a good conscience, we could not seem to want comfort; as we could not truly be unhappy, so we could hardly be discontent; without it, no affluence of other things can suffice to content us. It is an evil conscience that giveth an edge to all other evils, and enableth them sorely to afflict us, which otherwise would but slightly touch us: we become thence uncapable of comfort, seeing not only things here upon earth to cross us, but heaven to

Digitized by Google

lour upon us; finding no visible succour, and having no hope from the power invisible; yea having reason to be discouraged with the fear of God's displeasure. As he that hath a powerful enemy near cannot abide in peace, without anxious suspicion and fear; so he that is at variance with the Almighty, who is ever at hand, ready to cross and punish him, what quiet of mind can he enjoy? *There is no peace to the wicked.* Isai. lvii. 21.

SERM. XXXVII.

2 The contemplation of our future state is a sovereign medicine to work contentedness and to cure discontent[u]: as discontent easily doth seize upon, and cleaveth fast to souls, which earnestly do pore and dote upon these present things, which have in them nothing satisfactory or stable; so if we can raise our minds firmly to believe, seriously to consider, and worthily to prize the future state and its concernments, we can hardly ever be discontent in regard to these things. Considering heaven and its happiness, how low and mean, how sordid and vile, how unworthy of our care and our affection, will these inferior things appear! how very unconcerned shall we see ourselves to be in them, and how easily thence shall we be content to want them! What, shall any of us be then ready to say, doth it concern me in what rank or garb I pass my few days here? what considerable interest can I have in this uncertain and transitory state? what is any loss, any disgrace, any cross in this world to me, who am a citizen of heaven, who have a capacity and hope of the immense riches, the incorruptible glories, the perfect and endless joys of eternity? This was that 1 Thess. iv. 18.

[u] Vid. Greg. Naz. Ep. ccxiii. ad Theclam. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 185.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

which sustained the holy Apostles in all their distresses; *For this cause,* saith St Paul, *we faint not—while we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;* and, *I reckon,* saith he again, *that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

2 Cor. iv. 16, &c.; v. 7.

Rom. viii. 18.

If likewise we do with faith and seriousness consider the dismal state below of those, who are eternally secluded from all joy and bliss, who are irrecoverably condemned to utter darkness and the extremity of horrible pain, how tolerable, how pleasant, how very happy will the meanest state here appear to be! how vain a thing will it then seem to us to be, to dislike, or to be troubled with any worldly thing; to account any chance happening to us to be sad or disastrous! What, shall we say then, each of us, is this same loss to the loss of my soul and all its comforts for ever? what is this want to the perpetual want of heavenly bliss? what is this short and faint pain to the cruel pangs of endless remorse, to the weeping and gnashing of teeth in outward darkness, to everlasting burnings.

Matt. xxii. 13. Isai. xxxiii. 14.

Thus infinitely silly and petty must all concernments of this life appear to him, who is possessed with the belief and consideration of matters relating to the future state; whence discontent, in regard to them, can hardly find access to his mind.

3 Constant devotion is an excellent instrument and guard of content, an excellent remedy and fence against discontent.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

It is such in way of impetration, procuring the removal or alleviation of our crosses: for God hath promised that, *He will give good things to those that ask him; The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth; he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The poor man crieth, and the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of all his troubles;* the holy scripture is full of such declarations and promises, assuring us of succour from our distresses upon our supplication to God; whence St Paul thus adviseth against all solicitude; *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God: and* (addeth, signifying the consequence of this practice) *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Matt. vii. 11. Ps. cxlv. 18, 19. Jamesiv. 8. Ps. xxxiv. 6; cvii. 6.

Phil. iv. 6, 7. (Ps. xxv. 16; lxxxvi. 1, 4, 17; xliv. 23.)

It likewise performeth the same by procuring grace and aid from God, which may enable and dispose us to bear all evils well, which is really much better than a removal of them; for that hence they become wholesome and profitable to us, and causes of present good, and grounds of future reward: thus when St Paul besought God for deliverance from his thorn in the flesh, the return to him was; *My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness:* it was a greater favour to receive an improvement of spiritual strength, occasioned by that cross, than to be quite freed from it.

1 Cor. x. 13.

2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

Devotion also hath immediately of itself a special efficacy to produce content. As in any distress it is a great consolation, that we can have

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

recourse to a good friend, that we may discharge our cares and our resentments into his bosom; that we may demand advice from him, and, if need be, request his succour; so much more it must be a great comfort, that we can in our need approach to God, who is infinitely the most faithful, the most affectionate, the most sufficient friend that can be; always most ready, most willing, most able to direct and to relieve us: he desires and delights, that in the day of our trouble we should seek him; that we should pour forth our hearts before him; that we should cast our burdens and our cares upon him; that we should, upon all occasions, implore his guidance and aid: and complying with his desires, as we shall assuredly find a successful event of our devotions, so we shall immediately enjoy great comfort and pleasure in them.

Ps. lxxvii. 2; xxvii. 8; cv. 4; lxii. 8. 1 Sam. i. 15. Ps. lv. 22. 1 Pet. v. 7. Ps. v. 8; xxvii. 11; xxxi. 3; xliii. 3; cxxxix. 24; cxliii. 10; lxi. 2. Jer. xxxi. 9.

Rom. xv. 5.

The *God of all consolation* doth especially by this channel convey his comforts into our hearts; his very presence (that presence, in which the Psalmist saith, *There is fulness of joy*) doth mightily warm and cheer us; his Holy Spirit doth, in our religious intercourse with him, insinuate a lightsome serenity of mind, doth kindle sweet and kindly affections, doth scatter the gloomy clouds of sadness; practising it, we shall be able to say with the Psalmist, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.*

Ps. xvi. 11.

Ps. xciv. 19.

Humbly addressing ourselves to God, and reverently conversing with him, doth compose our minds and charm our passions, doth sweeten our humour, doth refresh and raise our spirits, and so doth immediately breed and nourish contentedness.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

It also strengtheneth our faith, and quickeneth our hope in God, whereby we are enabled to support our present evils, and peace of mind doth spring up within us. Isai. xxvi. 3.

It inflameth our love unto God, in sense of his gracious illapses, thence rendering us willing to endure any want or pain for his sake, or at his appointment. Ps. lxxiii. 26; lxix. 16; xxxiii. 4; lxxi. 20.

It, in fine, doth minister a ravishing delight, abundantly able to supply the defect of any other pleasures, and to allay the smart of any pains whatever; rendering thereby the meanest estate more acceptable and pleasant than any prosperity without it can be. So that if we be truly devout, we can hardly be discontent; it is discosting from God, by a neglect of devotion or by a negligence therein, that doth expose us to the incursions of worldly regret and sorrow.

These are general remedies and duties both in this and all other regards necessary, the which yet we may be induced to perform, in contemplation of this happy fruit (contentedness) arising from them. Further,

4 It serveth toward production of contentedness to reflect much upon our imperfection, unworthiness, and guilt; so as thereby to work in our hearts a lively sense of them, and a hearty sorrow for them: this will divert our sadness into its right channel, this will drown our lesser grief by the influx of a greater. It is the nature of a greater apprehension or pain incumbent to extinguish in a manner, and swallow up the sense of a lesser, although in itself grievous; as he that is under a fit of the stone doth scarce feel a pang of the gout;

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

he that is assaulted by a wolf will not regard the biting of a flea. Whereas then, of all evils and mischiefs, moral evils are incomparably far the greatest, in nature the most ugly and abominable, in consequence the most hurtful and horrible; seeing, in St Chrysostom's language, *Excepting sin, there is nothing grievous or terrible among human things; not poverty, not sickness, not disgrace, not that which seemeth the most extreme of all evils, death itself; those being names only among such as philosophate, names of calamity, void of reality; but the real calamity this, to be at variance with God, and to do that which displeaseth him*[x]; seeing evidently, according to just estimation, no evil beareth any proportion to the evil of sin, if we have a due sense thereof we can hardly be affected with any other accident; if we can keep our minds intent upon the heinous nature and the lamentable consequences of sin, all other evils cannot but seem exceedingly light and inconsiderable; we cannot but apprehend it a very silly and unhandsome thing to resent or regard them: what, shall we then judge, is poverty, in comparison to the want of a good conscience? what is sickness, compared to distemper of mind and decay of spiritual strength? what is any disappointment, to the being defeated and overthrown by temptation? what any loss, to the being deprived of God's love and favour? what

[x] *Οὐδὲν δεινὸν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, ἀλλ' ἡ ἁμαρτία μόνη· οὐ πενία, οὐ νόσος, οὐχ ὕβρις, οὐκ ἐπήρεια, οὐκ ἀτιμία, οὐ τὸ πάντων δοκοῦν ἔσχατον εἶναι τῶν κακῶν, ὁ θάνατος. ὀνόματα γὰρ ταῦτα μόνον ἐστὶ τοῖς φιλοσοφοῦσι· συμφορῶν ὀνόματα, πραγμάτων ἔρημα· ἡ δὲ ἀληθὴς συμφορὰ, τὸ προσκροῦσαι Θεῷ, καὶ ποιῆσαί τι τῶν μὴ δοκούντων αὐτῷ.*—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ε'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 492.] Vid. ad Olymp. Ep. XIII. Tom. VII. ad Theod. I. Tom. VI.

Digitized by Google

any disgrace, to the being out of esteem and respect with God? what any unfaithfulness or inconstancy of friends, to having deserted or betrayed our own soul? what can any danger signify to that of eternal misery, incurred by offending God? what pressure can weigh against the load of guilt, or what pain equal that of stinging remorse? in fine, what condition can be so bad as that of a wretched sinner? any case surely is tolerable, is desirable, is lovely and sweet, in comparison to this: would to God, may a man in this case reasonably say, that I were poor and forlorn as any beggar; that I were covered all over with botches and blains as any lazar; that I were bound to pass my days in an hospital or a dungeon; might I be chained to an oar, might I lie upon the rack, so I were clear and innocent: such thoughts and affections, if reflecting on our sinful doings and state do suggest and impress, what place can there be for resentment of other petty crosses? SERM. XXXVII.

Contrition also upon this score is productive of a certain sweetness and joy, apt to quash or to allay all worldly grief: as it worketh a salutary repentance not to be repented of, so it therewith breedeth a satisfactory comfort, which doth ever attend repentance[y]: he that is very sensible of his guilt, cannot but consequently much value the remedy thereof, mercy; and thence earnestly be moved to seek it; then, in contemplation of divine goodness, and considering God's gracious promises, will be apt to conceive faith and hope, upon his imploring mercy and resolution to amend; thence will spring up a cheerful satisfaction, so possessing 2 Cor. vii. 10.

[y] Vid. Chrys. ad Demet. et ad Stelech. Tom. VI.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

the heart, as to expel or to exclude other displeasures: a holy and a worldly sadness cannot well consist together.

5 Another good instrument of contentedness is sedulous application of our minds to honest employment. Honest studies and cares divert our minds, and drive sad thoughts from them: they cheer our spirits with wholesome food and pleasant entertainments; they yield good fruits, and a success accompanied with satisfaction, which will extinguish or temper discontent: while we are studious or active, discontent cannot easily creep in, and soon will be stifled.

Idleness is the great mother and the nurse of discontent: it layeth the mind open for melancholy conceits to enter; it yieldeth harbour to them, and entertainment there; it depriveth of all the remedies and allays which business affordeth.

Reciprocally, discontent also begetteth idleness, and by it groweth; they are like ice and water, arising each out of the other: we should therefore not suffer any sadness so to encroach upon us, as to hinder us from attending to our business, (the honest works and studies of our calling,) for it thereby will grow stronger and more hardly vincible.

6 A like expedient to remove discontent is good company[z]. It not only sometimes ministereth advices and arguments for content, but raiseth the drooping spirit, erecting it to a loving complaisance, drawing it out towards others in expressions of kindness, and yielding delight in those which we

[z] Ἀγαθὴ δὲ παραίφασίς ἐστιν ἑταίρου.—
[Hom. Il. xi. 792.]

Digitized by Google

receive from others, infecting us by a kind of contagion with good humour, and instilling pleasant ideas into our fancy, agreeably diverting us from sad and irksome thoughts: discontent affecteth retirement and solitude, as its element and food; good company partly starveth it by smothering sad thoughts, partly cureth it by exhilarating discourse. No man hardly can feel displeasure, while friendly conversation entertaineth him; no man returneth from it without some refreshment and ease of mind.

7 Having right and lowly conceits of ourselves is a most sure guardian and procurer of content: for answerable to a man's judgment of himself are his resentments of the dealing he meeteth with from God or man. He that thinks meanly, as he ought, of himself, will not easily be offended at any thing: any thing, will he think, is good enough for me; I deserve nothing from God, I cannot deserve much of man; if I have any competence of provision for my life, any tolerable usage, any respect, it is more than my due, I am bound to be thankful. But he that conceiteth highly (that is, vainly) of himself, nothing will satisfy him; nothing, thinks he, is good enough for him, or answerable to his deserts; nobody can yield him sufficient respect; any small neglect disturbeth and enrageth him: he cannot endure that any man should thwart his interest, should cross his humour, should dissent from his opinion; hence, seeing the world will not easily be induced to conceit of him as he doth of himself, nor to comply with his humours and pretences, it is impossible that he should be content.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

8 It conduceth to this purpose to contemplate and resent the public state of things, the interest of the world, of our country, of God's church. The sense of public calamities will drown that of private, as unworthy to be considered or compared with them; the sense of public prosperity will allay that of particular misfortune. How (will a wise and good man say) can I desire to prosper and flourish, while the state is in danger or distress? how can I grieve, seeing my country is in good condition? is it just, is it handsome, that I should be a nonconformist either in the public sorrow or joy? Indeed,

9 All hearty charity doth greatly alleviate discontent. If we bear such a good-will to our neighbour, as to have a sincere compassion of his evils and complacence in his good, our case will not much afflict us. If we can appropriate and enjoy the prosperity, the wealth, the reputation, of our neighbour, by delighting in them, what can we want, what can displease us? if our heart is enlarged in pity for the misfortunes of others, it cannot be contracted with grief for our own: our sorrow, like water, being thus diffused, cannot be so deep, but it will be more fruitful; it will produce such effects as will comfort and please us: it is a stingy selfishness which maketh us so very sensible of crosses and so uncapable of comfort.

10 Again, if we will attain contentment, we must take heed of setting our affection upon any worldly thing whatever, so as very highly to prize it, very passionately to affect it, very eagerly to pursue it; so as to conceive our happiness in any measure to hang on it or stick thereto: if there be

Digitized by Google

any such thing, we shall be disappointed in the acquist or the retention of it; or we shall be dissatisfied in its enjoyment.

So to adhere in affection to any thing is an adulterous disloyalty toward our Maker and best Friend, from which it is expedient that we should be reclaimed; whence God, in just anger or in kind mercy, will be apt to cross us in our attempts to get it, or to deprive us of its possession; whence the displeasure will follow, which always attendeth a separation from things we love. But, if we be suffered to obtain or to retain it, we shall soon find dissatisfaction therein; being either disgusted with some bitterness in it, (such as doth lurk in every sensible good,) or being cloyed with its lusciousness: it, after a small enjoyment, will become either distasteful or insipid.

This, according to continual experience, is the nature of all things, pleasant only to sense or fancy, presently to satiate: no beauty can long please the eye, no melody the ear, no delicacy the palate, no curiosity the fancy; a little time doth waste away, a small use doth wear out the pleasure which at first they afford: novelty commendeth and ingratiateth them; distance representeth them fair and lovely; the want or absence of them rendereth them desirable; but the presence of them dulleth their grace, the possession of them deadeneth the appetite to them.

New objects with a gentle and grateful touch warble upon the corporeal organs, or excite the spirits into a pleasant frisk of motion; but when use hath levigated the organs, or so pertunded them, that the spirits pass without any stop, those

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

objects are no longer felt, or very faintly; so that the pleasure ceaseth.

Only those things which reason (religious and sound reason) doth approve, do yield a lasting (undecaying, unalterable) satisfaction; if we set our affections on them, we cannot fail of content: in seeking them, we cannot be disappointed: for God (without any reservation or exception) hath promised to bestow them upon those who seriously and diligently seek them: nor can we be dispossessed of them; God will not take them away, and they lie beyond the reach of any other hand: having them, then, we cannot but fully and durably be satisfied in the fruition of them: the longer we have them, the more we shall like them; the more we taste them, the better we shall relish them: time wasteth not, but improveth the sense of their unfading beauty and indefectible sweetness.

11 It is of great influence toward contentedness, with an earnest and impartial regard to contemplate things as they are in themselves, divested of tragical appearances, in which they are wrapt by our own inconsiderate fancy, or which vulgar prejudices do throw upon them: as all things, looked upon by the corporeal eye through a mist, do seem bigger than in reality they are; so to the eye of our mind all things (both good and evil) seem hugely enlarged, when viewed through the fogs of our dusky imagination or of popular conceit. If we will esteem that very good, which with a gay appearance dazzleth our imagination, or which the common admiration and applause of men recommendeth, the most vain and worthless, the most dangerous, the most mischievous things often will

Digitized by Google

appear such: and if we please to account those things greatly bad, which look ugly or horridly to imagination, which are defamed by the injudicious part of men, or which men commonly do loathe, do fret at, do wail for, we shall take the best, most innocent, most useful, most wholesome things for such; and accordingly these errors of our minds will be followed by a perverse practice, productive of dissatisfaction and displeasure to us. No man ever will be satisfied, who values things according to the price which fancy setteth on them, or according to the rate they bear in the common market; who distinguisheth not between good and famous, bad and infamous; who is affected accordingly with the want of those things which men call good, with the presence of those which they term bad.

But if we judge of things, as God declareth, as impartial and cautious reason dictateth, as experience diligently observed (by their fruits and consequences) discovereth them to be, we shall have little cause to be affected by the want or presence of any such thing which is wont to produce discontent.

12 We should, to this purpose, take especial care to search out through our condition, and pick thence the good that is therein, making the best we can of it, enjoying and improving it; but what is inconvenient or offensive therein declining it, diminishing it, tempering it so well as we may, always forbearing to aggravate it. There are in nature divers simples, which have in them some part or some juice very noxious, which being severed and cast away, the rest becometh whole-

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

some food; neither indeed is there any thing in nature so venomous, but that from it, by art and industry, may be extracted somewhat medicinal and of good use when duly applied; so in most apparent evils lieth enclosed much good, which if we carefully separate, (casting away the intermixed dross and refuse,) we shall find benefit, and taste comfort thence: there is nothing so thoroughly bad, as, being well ordered and opportunely ministered, will not do us much good: so if from poverty we cast away or bear quietly that which a little pincheth the sense or grateth on the fancy, and enjoy the undistractedness of mind, the liberty, the leisure, the health, the security from envy, obloquy, strife, which it affordeth, how satisfactory may it become to us! The like conveniences are in disgrace, disappointment, and other such evils, which being improved may endear them to us: even sin itself (the worst of evils, the only true evil) may yield great benefits to us; it may render us sober and lowly in our own eyes, devout in imploring mercy, and thankful to God for it; merciful and charitable toward others in our opinions and censures; more laborious in our good practice, and watchful over our steps: and if this deadly poison well administered yieldeth effects so exceedingly beneficial and salutary, what may other harmless (though unhandsome and unpleasant) things do, being skilfully managed!

13 It is a most effectual means of producing content, and curing discontent, to rouse and fortify our faith in God, by, with most serious attention, reflecting upon the arguments and experiments, which assure us concerning God's particular provi-

Digitized by Google

dence over all, over us. It is really infidelity (in whole or in part, no faith, or a small and weak faith) which is at the root, as of all sin, so particularly of discontent: for how is it possible, did we firmly believe, and with any measure of attention consider, that God taketh care of us, that he tendereth our good, that he is ready at hand to succour us, (how then, I say, is it possible,) that we should fear any want, or grievously resent any thing incident? But we, like St Peter, are ὀλιγόπιστοι, *of little faith*, therefore we cannot walk on the sea, but in despair sink down: sometimes our faith is buried in oblivion or carelessness; we forget, or mind not, that there is Providence; but look on things as if they fell out casually or fatally; thence expect no redress from Heaven, so tumble into despair and disconsolateness. Sometimes, because God doth not, in our time and our way, relieve us or gratify us, we slip into profane doubt, questioning in our hearts whether he doth indeed regard us, or whether any relief is to be expected from him; not considering, that only God can tell when and how it is best to proceed; that often it is not expedient our wishes should be granted; that we are not wise enough or just enough to appoint or choose for ourselves; that it is impossible for God to gratify every man; that it would be a mad world, if God, in his government thereof, should satisfy all our desires.

SERM. XXXVII.

Matt. xiv. 31.

We forget how often God hath succoured us in our needs and straits, how continually he hath provided for us, how patiently and mercifully he hath borne with us, what miracles of bounty and mercy he hath performed in our behalf; we are like that distrustful and inconsiderate people, *Who*

Ps lxxviii. 42;

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVII.

Ps. cvi. 7, 13; ver. 21;

remembered not the hand of God, nor the day when he delivered them; Remembered not the multitude of his mercies; but *soon forgat his works, and waited not for his counsel; They forgat God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things in the Red sea.*

From such dispositions in us, our discontents do spring; and we cannot cure them, but by recollecting ourselves from such forgetfulness and negligence; by shaking off such wicked doubts and distrusts; by fixing our hearts and hopes on him who alone can help us; who is our strength, the strength of our heart, of our life, of our salvation.

xxii. 19; xlvi. 1; lxxxi. 1; lix. 17; cxliv. 1; lxxiii. 26; xxvii. 1; cxl. 7.

Of him (to conclude) let us humbly implore, that he in mercy would bestow upon us grace to submit in all things to his will, to acquiesce in all his dispensations, gladly to embrace and undergo whatever he allotteth to us; in every condition, and for all events befalling us, heartily to adore, thank, and bless him; even so to the ever-blessed God, our gracious Maker and Preserver, be eternally rendered all glory, thanksgiving, and praise. Amen.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXXVIII.

OF PATIENCE.

---

1 PET. II. 21.

Because also Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.

SERM. XXXVIII.

IN these words two things appear especially observable; a duty implied, the duty of patience, and a reason expressed, which enforceth the practice of that duty, the example of Christ. We shall, using no more preface or circumstance, first briefly, in way of explication and direction, touch the duty itself, then more largely describe and urge the example.

The word patience hath, in common usage, a double meaning, taken from the respect it hath unto two sorts of objects, somewhat different. As it respecteth provocations to anger and revenge by injuries or discourtesies, it signifieth a disposition of mind to bear them with charitable meekness; as it relateth to adversities and crosses disposed to us by Providence, it importeth a pious undergoing and sustaining them. That both these kinds of patience may here be understood, we may, consulting and considering the context, easily discern: that which immediately precedeth, *If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God,* relateth to good endurance of

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

adversity; that which presently followeth, *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not,* referreth to meek comporting with provocations: the text therefore, as it looketh backward, doth recommend the patience of adversities, as forward, the patience of contumelies. But seeing both these objects are reducible to one more general, comprising both, that is, things seeming evil to us, or offensive to our sense, we may so explicate the duty of patience, as to include them both.

Patience, then, is that virtue which qualifieth us to bear all conditions and all events, by God's disposal incident to us, with such apprehensions and persuasions of mind, such dispositions and affections of heart, such external deportments and practices of life, as God requireth and good reason directeth. Its nature will, I conceive, be understood best by considering the chief acts which it produceth, and wherein especially the practice, thereof consisteth; the which briefly are these:

1 A thorough persuasion, that nothing befalleth us by fate, or by chance, or by the mere agency of inferior causes, but that all proceedeth from the dispensation, or with the allowance of God; that, *Affliction doth not come forth of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground;* but that all, both good and evil, proceedeth out of the mouth of the Most High, according as David reflected when Shimei reviled him: *Let him,* saith the good king, *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David;* and as Job, when he was spoiled of all his goods, acknowledged, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*

Job v. 6.

Lam. iii. 38.

2 Sam. xvi. 10.

Job i. 21.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

2 A firm belief, that all occurrences, however adverse and cross to our desires, are well consistent with the justice, wisdom, and goodness of God; so that we cannot reasonably disapprove, repine at, or complain of them; but are bound and ready to avow with the Psalmist, that, *All his paths are mercy and truth; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works:* to judge and say with Hezekiah, *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken;* to confess with David unto him, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*

Ps. xxv. 10; cxlv. 17. 2 Kings xx. 19. Ps. cxix. 75.

3 A full satisfaction of mind, that all (even the most bitter and sad accidents) do (according to God's purpose) tend and conduce to our good; acknowledging the truth of those divine aphorisms: *Happy is the man whom God correcteth; Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth; As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*

Job v. 17. James i. 12. Prov. iii. 12. Heb. xii. 6. Rev. iii. 19.

4 An entire submission and resignation of our wills to the will of God, suppressing all rebellious insurrections and grievous resentments of heart against his providence; which may dispose us heartily to say after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done;* with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* with David, *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him;* yea, even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be*[a].

Luke xxii. 42. 1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Sam. xv. 26.

5 Bearing adversities calmly, cheerfully, and courageously, so as not to be discomposed with anger or grief; not to be put out of humour, not to be

[a] [Εἰ ταύτῃ τοῖς θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτῃ ἔστω.—Plat. Crito. 43 D.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII. dejected or disheartened; but in our disposition of mind to resemble the primitive saints, who were,

2 Cor. vi. 10. Ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, *As grieved, but always*

Heb. x. 34. *rejoicing;* who took joyfully the spoiling of their

James i. 2. goods, who accounted it all joy when they fell into divers tribulations.

6 A hopeful confidence in God for the removal or easement of our afflictions, and for his gracious aid to support them well; agreeable to those good

Lam. iii. 26. rules and precepts: *It is good that a man should both hope, and wait quietly for the salvation of the*

Ps. xxxvii. 7; xxvii. 14. *Lord; Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart;* according to the pattern of David, who, in such a case, thus roused

Ps. xlii. 5. and stayed himself: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance;* and after the holy Apostles, who in their most forlorn estate could say,

2 Cor. iv. 8. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

7 A willingness to continue, during God's pleasure, in our afflicted state, without weariness or irksome longings for alteration; according to

Prov. iii. 11. that advice of the Wise Man; *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction;* and that of the Apostle, backed with

Heb. xii. 3. our Lord's example, *Considering him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.*

8 A lowly frame of mind (that is, being sober in our conceits of ourselves, sensible of our un-

Digitized by Google

worthiness and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury, and wretchedness; of our manifold defects and miscarriages in practice; being meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirit; being deeply affected with reverence and dread toward the awful majesty, mighty power, perfect justice and sanctity of God; all this) wrought by our adversity, effectually, according to its design, quelling our haughty stomach, softening our hard hearts, mitigating our peevish humours; according to St Peter's injunction, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;* and God's own approbation joined with a gracious promise, *To this man will I look; even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* SERM. XXXVIII. 1 Pet. v. 6. Isai. lxvi. 2.

9 Restraining our tongues from all discontentful complaints and murmurings, all profane, harsh, unsavoury expressions, importing displeasure or dissatisfaction in God's dealings toward us, arguing desperation or distrust in him; such as were those of the impatient and incredulous Israelites: *They spake against God, and said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?* Such as they used, of whom the Prophet said, *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their king and their God;* such as they were guilty of, whom St Jude calleth Γογγυστὰς καὶ μεμψιμοίρους, *Murmurers and querulous persons,* (or such as found fault with their lot,) that which is styled, charging God foolishly; for abstaining from which, notwithstanding the pres- Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20. Isai. viii. 21. Jude 16.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

sure of his most grievous calamities, Job is commended, (where it is said, *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly;*) that which the Prophet condemneth as unreasonable in that expostulation, *Wherefore doth the living man complain?* In such cases we should smother our passions in a still and silent demeanour, as the Psalmist advised, and as he practised himself: *I was dumb,* saith he, *and opened not my mouth, because it was thy doings.* Yea, contrariwise, patience requireth,

Job i. 22.

Lam. iii. 39.

Ps. xxxvii. 7; xlvi. 10; iv. 4; xxxix. 9.

10 Blessing and praising God, (that is, declaring our hearty satisfaction in God's proceedings with us, acknowledging his wisdom, justice, and goodness therein, expressing a grateful sense thereof, as wholesome and beneficial to us,) in conformity to Job, who, upon the loss of all his comforts, did thus vent his mind: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Job i. 21.

11 Abstaining from all irregular and unworthy courses toward the removal or redress of our crosses; choosing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relax ourselves; contentedly wearing, rather than violently breaking our yoke, or bursting our bonds; rather continuing poor, than striving to enrich ourselves by fraud or rapine; rather lying under contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances attempting to gain the favour and respect of men; rather embracing the meanest condition, than labouring by any turbulent, unjust, or uncharitable practices to amplify our estate; rather enduring any inconvenience or distress, than setting our faces toward Egypt, or having recourse to any succour which God disalloweth; according to what

Jer. v. 5;

xlii. 15.

Digitized by Google

is implied in that reprehension of St Paul, *Now therefore it is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* and in that advice of St Peter, *Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

SERM. XXXVIII.

1 Cor. vi. 7.

1 Pet. iv. 19.

12 A fair behaviour toward the instruments and abettors of our affliction; those who brought us into it, or who detain us under it, by keeping off relief, or sparing to yield the succour which we might expect; the forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge, to retain any grudge or enmity toward them; but rather, even upon that score, bearing good-will, and shewing kindness unto them; unto them, not only as to our brethren, whom, according to the general law of charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, or as to the instruments of his pleasure toward us; considering, that by maligning or mischiefing them, we do signify ill resentment of God's dealings with us, and, in effect, through their sides do wound his providence: thus did the pious king demean himself, when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by Shimei; not suffering, upon this account, any harm or requital to be offered to him: thus did the holy Apostles, who, *Being reviled, did bless; being persecuted, did bear it; being defamed, did entreat:* thus did our Lord deport himself toward his spiteful adversaries, *Who being reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered, did not threaten; but committed it to him that judgeth righteously.*

2 Sam. xvi. 7.

1 Cor. iv. 12.

1 Pet. ii. 23; iii. 9.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

13 Particularly in regard to those, who, by injurious and offensive usage, do provoke us, patience importeth,

(1) That we be not hastily, over easily, not immoderately, not pertinaciously incensed with anger toward them, according to those divine precepts and aphorisms: *Be slow to wrath; Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Give place to wrath,* (that is, remove it). *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. Cease from anger, let go displeasure, fret not thyself anywise to do evil.*

James i. 19. Eccles. vii. 9. Prov. xvi. 32; xiv. 17, 29. Rom. xii. 19. Eph. iv. 31, 26. Col. iii. 8. Matt. v. 21, 24. Ps. xxxvii. 8.

(2) That we do not in our hearts harbour any ill will, or ill wishes, or ill designs toward them, but that we truly desire their good, and purpose to further it, as we shall have ability and occasion, according to that law, (even charged on the Jews,) *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* and according to that noble command of our Saviour, *Love your enemies, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

Levit. xix. 18. Matt. v. 44. Luke vi. 27.

(3) That, in effect, we do not execute any revenge, or for requital do any mischief to them, either in word or deed; but for their reproaches, exchange blessings, (or good words and wishes;) for their outrages, repay benefits and good turns; according to those evangelical rules: *Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you: Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not: See that none render evil for evil: Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but*

Matt. v. 44, 39. Rom. xii. 14. 1 Thess. v. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9.

Digitized by Google

contrariwise blessing: If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: Say not, I will do to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work: Say thou not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee. SERM. XXXVIII. Prov. xxv. 21. Rom. xii. 20. Prov. xxiv. 29; xx. 22.

14 In fine, patience doth include and produce a general meekness and kindness of affection, together with an enlarged sweetness and pleasantness in conversation and carriage toward all men; implying, that how hard soever our case, how sorry or sad our condition is, we are not therefore angry with the world, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; that we are not dissatisfied or disgusted with the prosperous estate of other men; that we are not become sullen or froward toward any man, because his fortune excelleth ours, but that rather we do rejoice with them that rejoice; we do find complacence and delight in their good success; we borrow satisfaction and pleasure from their enjoyments. Rom. xii. 15.

In these and the like acts, the practice of this virtue (a virtue which all men, in this state of inward weakness and outward trouble, shall have much need and frequent occasion to exercise) consisteth; unto which practice, even philosophy, natural reason, and common sense do suggest many inducements; the tenor of our holy faith and Religion do supply more and better; but nothing can more clearly direct, or more powerfully excite thereto, than that admirable example, by which our text doth enforce it: some principal of those rational inducements we shall cursorily touch, then insist upon this example.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

It will, generally, induce us to bear patiently all things incident, if we consider, that it is the natural right and prerogative of God to dispose of all things, to assign our station here, and allot our portion to us; whence it is a most wrongful insolence in us, by complaining of our state, to contest his right or impeach his management thereof: that we are obliged to God's free bounty for numberless great benefits and favours; whence it is vile ingratitude to be displeased for the want of some lesser conveniences: that God having undertaken and promised to support and succour us, it is a heinous affront to distrust him, and consequently to be dissatisfied with our condition: that seeing God doth infinitely better understand what is good for us than we can do, he is better affected toward us and more truly loveth us than we do ourselves, he with an unquestionable right hath an uncontrollable power to dispose of us; it is most reasonable to acquiesce in his choice of our state: that since we have no claim to any good or any pleasure, and thence, in withholding any, no wrong is done to us, it is unjust and frivolous to murmur or grumble: since we are, by nature, God's servants, it is fit the appointment of our rank, our garb, our diet, all our accommodations and employments in his family, should be left entirely to his discretion and pleasure: that we being grievous sinners, less than the least of God's mercies, meriting no good, but deserving sore punishment from him, it is just that we should be highly content and thankful for any thing on this side death and damnation: that our afflictions being the natural fruits and results of our choice or voluntary miscarriages, it is reason-

Gen. xxxii. 10.

Digitized by Google

able we should blame ourselves, rather than pick quarrels with Providence for them. That our condition, be it what it will, cannot, being duly estimated, be extremely bad or insupportably grievous; for that as no condition here is perfectly and purely good, (not deficient in some accommodations, not blended with some troubles,) so there is none that hath not its conveniences and comforts; for that it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which create the mischiefs adherent to any state; for that also how forlorn soever our case is, we cannot fail, if we please, of a capacity to enjoy goods far more than countervailing all possible want of these goods, or presence of these evils; we may have the use of our reason, a good conscience, hope in God, assurance of God's love and favour, abundance of spiritual blessings here, and a certain title to eternal glory and bliss hereafter; which, if we can have, our condition cannot be deemed uncomfortable. That, indeed, our adversity is a thing very good and wholesome, very profitable and desirable, as a means of breeding, improving, and exercising the best virtues, of preparing us for and entitling us to the best rewards. That our state cannot ever be desperate; our adversity, probably, may not be lasting, (there being no connection between the present and the future, vicissitudes being frequent, all things depending on the arbitrary dispensation of God, who doth always pity us, and is apt to relieve us). That, however, our affliction will not outlive ourselves, and, certainly, must soon expire with our life. That this world is not a place of perfect convenience, or pure delight; we come not hither to do our

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

will, or enjoy our pleasure; we are not born to make laws, or pick our condition here; but that trouble is natural and proper to us (*We are born thereto, as the sparks fly upwards*). *No tribulation seizeth us, but such as is human;* whence it is reasonable, that we contentedly bear the crosses suitable to our nature and state. That no adversity is, in kind or degree, peculiar to us; but if we survey the conditions of other men, (of our brethren every where, of our neighbours all about us,) and compare our case with theirs, we shall find, that we have many consorts and associates in adversity, most as ill, many far worse bestead than ourselves; whence it must be a great fondness and perverseness to be displeased, that we are not exempted from, but exposed to bear a share in the common troubles and burdens of mankind. That it hath particularly been the lot of the best men (persons most excellent in virtue and most deep in God's favour) to sustain adversity; and it, therefore, becometh us willingly and cheerfully to accept it. That, in fine, patience itself is the best remedy to ease us in, to rescue us from adversity; for it cannot much annoy us, if we bear it patiently; God will, in mercy, remove it, if we please him, by demeaning ourselves well under it; but that impatience doth not at all conduce to our relief, doth, indeed, exasperate and augment our pain: such considerations may induce us to a patience in general respecting all sorts of evil.

Job v. 7.

1 Cor. x. 13.

There are also reasons particularly disposing to bear injuries and contumelies from men calmly and meekly, without immoderate wrath, rancorous hatred, or spiteful revenge toward them: because

Digitized by Google

they do proceed from Divine Providence, disposing or permitting them (for the trial of our patience, the abasing our pride, the exercising of some other virtues, or for other good purposes) to fall upon us: because vindication of misdemeanours committed against us doth not appertain to us, we not being competent judges of them, nor rightful executors of the punishments due to them, God having reserved to himself the right of decision and power of execution; *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay it*[b]: because we are obliged to interpret charitably the actions of our neighbour, supposing his miscarriages to proceed from infirmity, from mistake, or from some cause, which we should be rather inclinable to excuse, than to prosecute with hatred or revenge: because, indeed, our neighbour's most culpable offences, as issuing from distemper of mind, are more reasonably the objects of compassion and charity, than of anger or ill will: because we are bound to forgive all injuries by the command of God, and in conformity to his example, who passeth by innumerable, most heinous offences committed against himself; *Gracious is the Lord, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy; longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth;* so must we be also, if we will be like him or please him: because we ourselves, being subject to incur the same faults in kind, or greater in value, do need much pardon, and should thence be ready to allow it unto others, both in equity, and in grati-

Rom. xii. 19. Heb. x. 30. Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.

Ps. cxlv. 8; lxxxvi. 15.

[b] Vid. Tert. de Patient. cap. x. [Quid ergo credimus judicem illum, si non et ultorem? Hoc se nobis repromittit dicens: Vindictam mihi, et ego vindicabo, id est, Patientiam mihi, et ego patientiam remunerabo.—Opp. p. 146 A.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

tude toward God, lest that in the Gospel be applied to us; *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Because God hath made it a necessary condition of our obtaining mercy, promising us favour if we yield it, menacing us extremity, if we refuse it; *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:* because our neighbour suffering by our revenge in any manner, (in his body, interest, or reputation,) doth not anywise profit us, or benefit our estate, but needlessly doth multiply and increase the stock of mischief in the world; yea, commonly doth bring further evil upon ourselves, provoking him to go on in offending us, rendering him more implacably bent against us, engaging us consequently deeper in strife and trouble: because no wrong, no disgrace, no prejudice we can receive from men is of much consequence to us, if our mind be not disordered; if we are free from those bad passions, which really are the worst evils that can befall us: because, in fine, impatience itself is insignificant and ineffectual to any good purpose, or rather produceth ill effects[c]; it doth not cure our wound, or assuage our grief; it removeth no inconvenience, nor repaireth any damage we have received, but rather inflameth our distemper and

Matt. xviii. 32.

Matt. vi. 14. Ecclus. viii. 2. Matt. xviii. 35. Mark xi. 25.

[c] Nempe idcirco quis te lædit ut doleas; quia fructus lædentis in dolore læsi est.—Id. ibid. cap. VIII. [Opp. p. 145 B.]

Quod si patientiæ incubabo, non dolebo; si non dolebo, ulcisci non desiderabo.—Id. ibid. cap. X. [p. 146 B.]

Digitized by Google

aggravateth our pain; more really, indeed, molesting and hurting us, than the injury or discourtesy which causeth it. Thus, briefly, doth reason dictate to us the practice of all patience. SERM. XXXVIII.

But the example proposed by the Apostle here, and otherwhere by St Paul, (*Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*—) by the Apostle to the Hebrews, (*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*—) by our Lord himself, (*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly*—) that doth, in a more lively manner, express how in such cases we should deport ourselves, and most strongly engageth us to comply with duties of this nature. Let us now, therefore, describe it, and recommend it to your consideration. Phil. ii. 5. Heb. xii. 1, 2. Matt. xi. 29.

The example of our Lord was, indeed, in this kind the most remarkable that ever was presented, the most perfect that can be imagined[d]: he was, above all expression, *A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;* he did undertake, as to perform the best works, so to endure the worst accidents to which human nature is subject; his whole life being no other than one continual exercise of patience and meekness, in all the parts and to the utmost degrees of them. If we trace the footsteps of his life from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we shall not be able to observe any matter of complacence, scarce any of comfort (in respect to his natural or worldly state) to have befallen him. Isai. liii. 3.

His parentage was mean, to appearance; and his birth, in all exterior circumstances, despicable:

[d] Vid. Tert. de Pat. cap. III. [Opp. p. 141.] Cypr. de Pat. [Opp. p. 249.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

Matt. xiii. 55. Mark vi. 3. *Is not this the carpenter's son?* were words of contempt and offence, upon all occasions thrown upon him.

His life was spent not only in continual labour and restless travel, but in hard poverty; yea, in extreme penury, beneath the state not only of the meanest men, but of the most shifting beasts: *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

Matt. viii. 20; xxi. 18, 19.

For his necessary sustenance we find him often destitute of ordinary provision, (as when he sought food from the barren fig-tree,) often indebted for it to the courtesy and, as it were, alms of the vilest people, of publicans and sinners[e]: so, Δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, *He was,* as the Apostle saith, *a beggar for us.*

2 Cor. viii. 9.

Yet may we never perceive him anywise discontented with, or complaining of his condition; not discouraged or depressed in spirit thereby, not solicitously endeavouring any correction or change thereof; but willingly embracing it, heartily acquiescing therein; and, notwithstanding all its inconveniences, cheerfully discharging his duties, vigorously pursuing his main designs of procuring glory to God and benefit to men.

Nor did he only with content undergo the incommodities of a poor estate, but he was surrounded with continual dangers; the most powerful men of those times, enraged with envy, ambition, and avarice, desperately maligning him, and being incessantly attentive, upon all occasions, to molest, hurt, and destroy him: *The world,* (as he saith

John xv. 18;

[e] Nullius mensam tectumve despexit.—Tert. [de Pat. cap. III. Opp. p. 141 A.]

Digitized by Google

himself, that is, all the powerful and formidable part of the world) *hating me;* yet did not this anywise dismay or distemper him, nor cause him either to repine at his condition or decline his duty. He utterly disregarded all their spiteful machinations, persisting immoveable in the prosecution of his pious and charitable undertakings, to the admiration of those who observed his demeanour: *Is not this he,* said they, *whom they seek to kill? but lo, he speaketh boldly.* SERM. XXXVIII. John vii. 25.

He did, indeed, sometimes opportunely shun their fury, and prudently did elude their snares, but never went violently to repel them, or to execute any revenge for them; improving the wonderful power he was endued with altogether to the advantage of mankind, never to the bane or hurt of his malicious enemies. Luke iv. 30. Matt. xxi. 27; xxii. 18.

Sensible enough he was of the causeless hatred they bare him, (Ἐμίσησάν με δωρεὰν, *They,* said he, *have hated me for nothing,*) and of their extreme ingratitude; yet never could he be provoked to resent or requite their dealing: see how mildly he did expostulate the case with them; *Then,* saith St John, *the Jews took up stones to stone him: Jesus answered them, Many good things have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those do ye stone me?* John xv. 25; x. 31.

To be extremely hated and inhumanly persecuted, without any fault committed or just occasion offered, is greatly incensive of human passion; but for the purest and strongest good-will, for the most inexpressible beneficence, to be recompensed with most virulent reproaches, most odious slanders, most outrageous misusages—how exceeding was

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII. that meekness, which, without any signification of regret or disgust, could endure it!

Matt. xxiii. 37. Out of most tender charity and ardent desire of their salvation, he instructed them, and instilled heavenly doctrine into their minds; what thanks, what reward did he receive for that great favour?

John vii. 12. Matt. xxvii. 63; to be reputed and reported an impostor: Πλανᾷ τὸν ὄχλον, *He,* said they, *doth impose upon the people.*

He took occasion to impart the great blessing of pardon for sin to some of them, confirming his authority of doing it by a miraculous work of goodness; how did they resent such an obligation?

ix. 3, &c. by accounting him a blasphemer: *Behold,* saith St Matthew, *certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth:* which most harsh and uncharitable censure of theirs he did not fiercely reprehend, but calmly discussed and refuted by a clear reasoning[f]; Ἱνατί ὑμεῖς ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρά; *Wherefore conceive ye evil in your hearts? for whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk?* that is, Is it not credible, that he who can perform the one may dispense the other?

He freed them from most grievous diseases, yea, rescued them from the greatest mischief possible

Acts x. 38. in nature, being possessed by the unclean fiend; how did they entertain this mighty benefit? by most horrible calumny, accusing him of sorcery or

Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24; conspiracy with the Devil himself. *The Pharisees said, He casteth out devils by the prince of the devils:* yea, thence attributing to him the very

x. 25; name and title of the grand Devil; *If they have*

[f] Ingratos curavit, insidiatoribus cessit.—Tert. [de Pat. cap. III. Opp. p. 141 A.]

Digitized by Google

called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more (shall they defame) *them of his household?* Yet this most injurious defamation he no otherwise rebuketh, than by a mild discourse strongly confuting it; *Every kingdom,* said he, *divided against itself is brought to desolation—and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?* that is, the Devil better understands his interest, than to assist any man in dispossessing himself. Matt. xii. 25.

He did constantly labour in reclaiming them from error and sin, in converting them to God and goodness, in proposing fair overtures of grace and mercy to them, in shewing them by word and practice the sure way to happiness: What issue was there of all his care and pains? What but neglect, distrust, disappointment, rejection of himself, of what he said, and what he did? *Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* was a prophecy abundantly verified by their carriage toward him. John xii. 38.

These and the like usages, which he perpetually did encounter, he constantly received without any passionate disturbance of mind, any bitter reflections upon that generation, any revengeful enterprises against them; yea, requited them with continued earnestness of hearty desires, and laborious endeavours for their good.

We might observe the ingrateful disrespects of his own countrymen and kindred toward him, which he passeth over without any grievous disdain; rather excusing it, by noting that entertainment to have been no peculiar accident to himself, but usual to all of like employment;

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

No prophet, said he, *is acceptable in his own country.*

Luke iv. 24. Matt. xiii. 57.

We might also mention his patient suffering repulses from strangers; as, when being refused admittance into a Samaritan village, and his disciples, being incensed with that rude discourtesy, would have fire called down from heaven to consume those churls[g], he restrained their unadvised wrath, and thus expressed his admirable meekness: *The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*

Luke ix. 53, 56; ix. 41. Matt. xvii. 17;

We might likewise remark his meek comporting with the stupid and perverse incredulity of his disciples[h], notwithstanding so many pregnant and palpable inducements continually exhibited for confirmation of their faith, the which he no otherwise than sometime gently admonisheth them of, saying, Τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* Ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας; *O thou of small faith, why didst thou doubt?*

viii. 26; xiv. 31.

What should I insist on these, although very remarkable instances, since that one scene of his most grievous (shall I say, or glorious) passion doth represent unto us a perfect and most lively image of the highest patience and meekness possible; of the greatest sorrow that ever was or could be, yet of a patience surmounting it; of the extremest malice that ever was conceived, yet of a charity overswaying it; of injury most intolerable, yet of a meekness willingly and sweetly bearing it:

[g] Non illi saltem civitati quæ eum recipere noluerat iratus est, cum etiam discipuli tam contumelioso oppido cœlestes ignes representari voluissent.—Tert. [de Pat. cap. III. Opp. p. 141 A.]

[h] Non peccatores, non publicanos aspernatus est.—Id. ibid.

Digitized by Google

there may we observe the greatest provocations from all hands to passionate animosity of spirit and intemperate heat of speech, yet no discovery of the least disorderly, angry, or revengeful thought, the least rash, bitter, or reproachful word; but all undergone with clearest serenity of mind, and sweetness of carriage toward all persons.

To Judas, who betrayed him, how doth he address himself? Doth he use such terms as the man deserved, or as passion would have suggested, and reason would not have disallowed? Did he say, Thou most perfidious villain, thou monster of iniquity and ingratitude! thou desperately wicked wretch! dost thou, prompted by thy base covetousness, treacherously attempt to ruin thy gracious Master and best Friend; thy most benign and bountiful Saviour? No; instead of such proper language, he useth the most courteous and endearing terms: Ἑταῖρε, ἐφ' ᾧ πάρει; *Friend,* (or companion,) *for what dost thou come?* or what is thy business here? A tacit charitable warning there is to reflect upon his unworthy and wicked action, but nothing apparent of wrath or reproach. Matt. xxvi. 50;

From his own disciples and servants, who had beheld his many miraculous works, and were indebted to him for the greatest favours, he reasonably might have expected a most faithful adherence and most diligent attendance on him in that juncture: yet he found them careless and slothful: What then? How did he take it? Was he angry, did he upbraid, did he storm at them, did he threaten to discard them? No; he only first gently admonisheth them: *What, could ye not watch one hour with me?* then a little exciteth them, *Watch* xxvi. 40, 41.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: he withal suggesteth an excuse for their drowsiness and dulness; *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak:* in fine, he indulgeth to their weakness, letting them alone, and saying, Καθεύδετε τὸ λοιπὸν, *Sleep on now, and take your rest.*

Matt. xxvi. 41, 45.

When he foresaw they would be offended at his (to appearance) disastrous estate, and fearfully would desert him, he yet expressed no indignation against them, or decrease of affection toward them upon that score; but simply mentioneth it, as unconcerned in it, and not affected thereby.

And the unworthy apostasy of that disciple, whom he had especially favoured and dignified, he only did mildly forewarn him of, requiting it foreseen by the promise of his own effectual prayers for his support and recovery; and when St Peter had committed that heinous fact, our good Lord only looked on him with an eye of charity and compassion, which more efficaciously struck him, than the most dreadful threat or sharp reprehension could have done: *Peter thereupon went out, and wept bitterly.*

Luke xxii. 61, 62.

When the high priest's officer, upon no reasonable occasion, did injuriously and ignominiously strike him[1], he returned only this mild expostulation: *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; if well, why smitest thou me?* that is, I advise thee to proceed in a fair and legal way against me, not to deal thus boisterously and wrongfully, to thy own harm.

John xviii. 23.

[1] Cypr. Ep. LXV. [Item sub ictu passionis cum alapam accepisset, et ei diceretur, *Sic respondes pontifici*, nihil ille contumeliose locutus est in personam pontificis, sed magis innocentiam suam tuitus est dicens: *Si male*, &c.—Opp. p. 113.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

Even careful and tender he was of those who were the instruments of his suffering; he protected them from harm who conducted him to execution; as we see in the case of the high priest's servant, whom (with more zeal than wherewith he ever regarded his own safety) he defended from the fury of his own friend, and cured of the wounds received in the way of persecuting himself. Luke xxii. 51, &c.

All his demeanour under that great trial was perfectly calm, not the least regret or reluctancy of mind, the least contradiction or obloquy of speech appearing therein; such it was as became, *The Lamb of God,* who was to *take away the sins of the world,* by a willing oblation of himself; such as did exactly correspond to the ancient prophecies: *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;* and, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.* John i. 29. Issai. liii. 7; l. 6.

Neither did the wrongful slanders devised and alleged against him by suborned witnesses, nor the virulent invectives of the priests, nor the barbarous clamours of the people, nor the contemptuous spitting upon him and buffeting him, nor the cruel scourgings, nor the contumelious mockeries, nor all the bloody tortures inflicted upon him, wring from him one syllable importing any dissatisfaction in his case, any wrath conceived for his misusages, any grudge or ill-will in his mind toward his persecutors; but, on the contrary, instead of hatred and revenge, he declared the greatest kindness and charity toward them, praying heartily to God his

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

Father for the pardon of their sins. Instead of aggravating their crime and injury against him, he did in a sort extenuate and excuse it by consideration of their ignorance and mistake: *Lord*, said he, in the height of his sufferings, *forgive them; for they know not what they do.* The life they so violently bereaved him of, he did willingly mean to lay down for the ransom of their lives; the blood they spilt, he wished to be a salutary balsam for their wounds and maladies; he most cheerfully did offer himself by their hands a sacrifice for their offences. No small part of his afflictions was a sense of their so grievously displeasing God, and pulling mischief on their own heads, a foresight of his kind intentions being frustrated by their obstinate incredulity and impenitence, a reflection upon that inevitable vengeance, which from the Divine justice would attend them; this foreseen did work in him a distasteful sense, (more grievous than what his own pain could produce,) and drew from him tears of compassion, (such as no resentment of his own case could extort;) for, *When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace.*

Luke xxiii. 34.

Luke xix. 41; xiii. 34.

If ever he did express any commotion of mind in reference to this matter, it was only then when one of his friends, out of a blind fondness of affection, did presume to dissuade him from undergoing these evils; then indeed, being somewhat moved with indignation, he said to St Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

Matt. xvi. 23.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

Neither was it out of a stupid insensibility or stubborn resolution, that he did thus behave himself; for he had a most vigorous sense of all those grievances, and a strong (natural) aversation from undergoing them; as those dolorous agonies wherewith he struggled, those deadly groans he uttered, those monstrous lumps of blood he sweat out, those earnest prayers he made to be freed from them, declare; but from a perfect submission to the Divine will, and entire command over his passions, an excessive charity toward mankind, this patient and meek behaviour did spring: *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt; let not my will, but thine be done. No man taketh away my life, but I lay it down of my own accord: I will give my flesh for the life of the world.* So doth our Lord himself express the true grounds of his passion and his patience.

Matt. xxvi. 37, 38. Luke xxii. 44. John xii. 27. Matt. xxvi. 39. Heb. v. 7. John xviii. 11. Matt. xxvi. 39. Luke xxii. 42. John x. 18; vi. 51.

Such is the example of our Lord: the serious consideration whereof how can it otherwise than work patience and meekness in us? If he, that was the Lord of glory, (infinitely excellent in dignity and virtue,) did so readily embrace, did so contentedly endure such extremities of penury, hardship, disgrace, and pain, how can we refuse them, or repine at them? Can we pretend to a better lot than he received, or presume that God must deal better with us than he did with his own dearest Son? Can we be displeased at a conformity to our Lord and Master? Can we, without shame, affect to live more splendidly, or to fare more deliciously than he chose to do? Shall we fret or wail, because

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

our desires are crossed, our projects defeated, our interests anywise prejudiced; whenas his most earnest desires and his most painful endeavours had so little of due and desired success; when he was ever ready, and had so constant occasion to say, *Let not my will be done?* Can we despise that state of meanness and sorrow which he, from the highest sublimities of glory and beatitude, was pleased to stoop unto? Can we take ourselves for the want of any present conveniences or comforts to be wretched, whenas the fountain of all happiness was destitute of all such things, and scarce did ever taste any worldly pleasure? Are we fit or worthy to be his disciples, if we will not take up his cross and follow him; if we will not go to his school, (that school wherein he is said himself to have learnt obedience,) if we will not con that lesson which he so loudly hath read out, and transcribe that copy which he so fairly hath set before us? Can we pretend to those great benefits, those high privileges, those rich and excellent rewards, which he hath attained for us, and which he proposeth to us, if we will not go on toward them in that way of patience which he hath trod before us?

Luke xiv. 27; ix. 23. Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24.

Heb. v. 8;

ii. 9, 10. Phil. ii. 9.

Heb. xii. 3.

Can we also, if we consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners, be transported with any wrathful or revengeful passion, upon any provocation from our brethren[k]? Can we hope or wish for better usage from men than our Lord did ever find? Can we be much displeased with any man for thwarting our desires or interests, for dissenting from our conceits, for crossing our humours,

[k] Quam gravis causa sit hominis Christiani servum pati nolle, cum prior passus sit Dominus, &c.—Cypr. Ep. LVI. [Opp. p. 92.]

Digitized by Google

whenas he, to whom all respect and observance was due, did meet with so little regard or compliance in any way; continually did encounter repulses, disappointments, oppositions from the perverse and spiteful world? Can we be very jealous of our credit, or furious when our imaginary honour (honour that we never really deserved or can justly claim, being guilty of so many great faults and sins) is touched with the least disgraceful reflection, if we do well observe and mind, that the most truly, and indeed only honourable personage (only honourable, because only innocent person) that ever was, had his reputation aspersed by the most odious reproaches which deepest envy and malice could devise, without any grievous resentment, or being solicitous otherwise to assert or clear it than by a constant silence? Can we be exasperated by every petty affront, (real or supposed,) when the most noble, most courteous, most obliging person that ever breathed upon earth was treacherously exposed to violence by his own servant, shamefully deserted by his own most beloved friends, despitefully treated by those whom he never had offended, by those upon whom he had heaped the greatest benefits, without expressing any anger or displeasure against them, but yielding many signal testimonies of tenderest pity and love toward them? Can we see our Lord treated like a slave and a thief, without any disturbance or commotion of heart; and we vile wretches, upon every slight occasion, swell with fierce disdain, pour forth reproachful language, execute horrible mischief upon our brethren? He, indeed, was surrounded with injuries and affronts; every sin, that since the foundation of things hath

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXVIII.

been committed, was an offence against him, and a burden upon him; (*God laid upon him the iniquities of us all;*) so many declared enemies, so many rebels, so many persecutors, so many murderers he had, as there have lived men in the world; for every sinner did in truth conspire to his affliction and destruction; we all, in effect, did betray him, did accuse him, did mock, did scourge, did pierce, and crucify him; yet he forgave all offences, he died for all persons; *While we were yet enemies, yet sinners, he died for us,* to rescue us from death and misery: and shall we not then, in imitation of him, for his dear sake, in gratitude, respect, and obedience to him, be ready to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to forgive any small wrongs or offences from them[1]; whatever they do to us, to love them, and do them what good we can? If so admirable a pattern of patience and meekness so immense cannot, what is there that can oblige or move us? I conclude with those doxologies to our so patient and meek Redeemer:

Isai. liii. 6.

Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

Rev. v. 12, 13;

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

i. 5, 6.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

[1] Rependamus illi patientiam, quam pro nobis ipse dependit.—Tert. de Pat. cap. XVI. [Opp. p. 149 B.]

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXXIX.

REJOICE EVERMORE.

1 THESS. V. 16.

Rejoice evermore.

REJOICE evermore! O good Apostle, how acceptable rules dost thou prescribe! O blessed God, how gracious laws dost thou impose! This is a rule, to which one would think all men should be forward to conform; this is a law, which it may seem strange, that any man should find in his heart to disobey: for what can any soul desire more than to be always on the merry pin, or to lead a life in continual alacrity? Who readily would not embrace a duty, the observance whereof is not only pleasant, but pleasure itself? Who is so wild as to affect a sin, which hath nothing in it but disease and disgust?

That joy should be enjoined, that sadness should be prohibited, may it not be a plausible exception against such a precept, that it is superfluous and needless, seeing all the endeavours of men do aim at nothing else but to procure joy and eschew sorrow; seeing all men do conspire in opinion with Solomon, that, *A man hath nothing better under the sun than—to be merry.* Were it not rather expedient to recommend sober sadness, or to repress the inclinations of men to effuse mirth and jollity?

Eccles. viii. 15; ii. 24; iii. 12, 22; v. 18, 26.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

So it may seem; but yet, alas! if we consult experience, or observe the world, we shall find this precept very ill obeyed: for do we not commonly see people in heavy dumps? do we not often hear doleful complaints? is not this world apparently a stage of continual trouble and grief? Did not the Preacher, upon a diligent survey of all the works done under the sun, truly proclaim, *Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit?* Where, I pray, is any full or firm content? where is solid and durable joy to be found?

Eccles. i. 14.

It is true that men, after a confused manner, are very eager in the quest, and earnest in the pursuit of joy; they rove through all the forest of creatures, and beat every bush of nature for it, hoping to catch it either in natural endowments and improvements of soul, or in the gifts of fortune, or in the acquists of industry; in temporal possessions, in sensual enjoyments, in ludicrous divertisements and amusements of fancy; in gratification of their appetites and passions; they all hunt for it, though following a different scent, and running in various tracks; some in way of plodding for rare notions; some in compassing ambitious projects; some in amassing heaps of wealth; some in practice of over-reaching subtleties; some in wrecking their malice, their revenge, their envy; some in venting frothy conceits, bitter scoffs, or profane railleries; some in jovial conversation and quaffing the full bowls; some in music and dancing; some in gallantry and courting; some in all kinds of riotous excess and wanton dissoluteness; so each in his way doth incessantly prog for joy; but all much in vain, or without any considerable success; finding at

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

most, instead of it, some faint shadows, or transitory flashes of pleasure, the which, depending on causes very contingent and mutable, residing in a frail temper of fluid humours of body, consisting in slight touches upon the organs of sense, in frisks of the corporeal spirits, or in fumes and vapours twitching the imagination, do soon flag and expire; their short enjoyment being also tempered with regret, being easily dashed by any cross accident, soon declining into a nauseous satiety, and in the end degenerating into gall and bitter remorse[a]; for, *Even,* as Solomon observed, *in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness:* and, *Though,* as it is said in Job, *wickedness is sweet in the mouth—yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him:* so that, indeed, the usual delights which men affect are such, that we should not if we could, and we could not if we would, constantly entertain them[b]; such rejoicing evermore being equally unreasonable and impossible.

Prov. xiv. 13.

xx. 12, 14, 20.

Wherefore there is ground more than enough, that we should be put to seek for a true, substantial, and consistent joy; it being withal implied, that we should effect it in another way, or look for it in another box, than commonly men do; who therefore are so generally disappointed, because they would have it upon impossible or undue terms, and least expect it there, where it is only to be had.

[a] Sunt quædam tristes voluptates.—Sen. Ep. LXVII. [12.]

[b] Nam quoquoversum se verterit anima hominis, ad dolores figitur, alibi præterquam in te.—Aug. Conf. IV. 10. [Opp. Tom. I. col. 102 D.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

It is a scandalous misprision, vulgarly admitted, concerning Religion, that it is altogether sullen and sour, requiring a dull, lumpish, morose kind of life, barring all delight, all mirth, all good humour; whereas, on the contrary, it alone is the never-failing source of true, pure, steady joy; such as is deeply rooted in the heart, immoveably founded in the reason of things, permanent like the immortal spirit wherein it dwelleth, and like the eternal objects whereon it is fixed; which is not apt to fade or cloy; and is not subject to any impressions apt to corrupt or impair it: whereas, in our text, and in many texts parallel to it, we see, that our Religion doth not only allow us, but even doth oblige us to be joyful, as much and often as can be, not permitting us to be sad for one minute, banishing the least fit of melancholy, charging us in all times, upon all occasions, to be cheerful; supposing, consequently, that it is in some manner possible to be so, and affording power to effect what it doth require.

Such indeed is the transcendent goodness of our God, that he maketh our delight to be our duty, and our sorrow to be our sin, adapting his holy will to our principal instinct; that he would have us to resemble himself, as in all other perfections, so in a constant state of happiness; that, as he hath provided a glorious heaven of bliss for us hereafter, so he would have us enjoy a comfortable paradise of delight here. He accordingly hath ordered the whole frame of our Religion in a tendency to produce joy in those who embrace it; for what is the Gospel, but, as the holy Angel, the first promulger of it, did report, *Good tidings of great*

Luke ii. 10.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

joy to all people? How doth God represent himself therein, but as the God of love, of hope, of peace, of all consolation, cheerfully smiling in favour on us, graciously inviting us to the most pleasant enjoyments, bountifully dispensing most comfortable blessings of mercy, of grace, of salvation to us? For what doth our Lord call us to him, but that he may give us rest and refreshment to our souls; that he may wipe away all tears from our eyes; that he may save us from most woful despair, and settle us in a blessed hope; that we may enter into our Master's joy; that our joy may be full, and such as no man can take from us?

Rom. xv. 33. 13. 5. Eph. ii. 4. 2 Cor. i. 3. xiii. 11. 1 Pet. v. 10. James v. 11. Matt. xi. 28. Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 4. Tit. ii. 13. Matt. xxv. 21. John xv. 11; xvi. 22, 24;

What is the great overture of the Gospel, but the gift of a most blessed Comforter, to abide with us for ever, cheering our hearts with his lightsome presence and ravishing consolations? Wherein doth the kingdom of heaven consist? *Not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* What are the prime fruits sprouting from that root of Christian life, the Divine Spirit? they are, as St Paul telleth us, *Love, joy, and peace.* Are there not numberless declarations importing a joyful satisfaction granted to the observers of God's commandments; that, *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart?* Doth not our Lord pronounce a special beatitude to the practiser of every virtue? And if we scan all the doctrines, all the institutions, all the precepts, all the promises of Christianity, will not each appear pregnant with matter of joy, will not each yield great reason and strong obligation to this duty of *Rejoicing evermore?*

xiv. 16. Rom. xiv. 17. Gal. v. 22. Ps. xcvii. 11; cxviii. 15; xxxii. 11; lxviii. 3;

Wherefore a Christian, as such, (according to

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

the design of his Religion, and in proportion to his compliance with its dictates,) is the most jocund, blithe, and gay person in the world; always in humour and full of cheer; continually bearing a mind well satisfied, a light heart and calm spirit, a smooth brow and serene countenance, a grateful accent of speech, and a sweetly composed tenor of carriage; no black thought, no irksome desire, no troublesome passion should lodge in his breast; any furrow, any frown, any cloud doth sit ill upon his face; the least fretful word or froward behaviour doth utterly misbecome him; if at any time it appear otherwise, it is a deflection from his character; it is a blemish and wrong to his profession; it argueth a prevarication in his judgment or in his practice; he forgetteth that he is a Christian, or hath not preserved the innocence belonging to that name. For, if a Christian remembereth what he is, or is sensible of his condition; if he reflecteth on the dignity of his person, the nobleness of his relations, the sublimity of his privileges, the greatness and certainty of his hopes, how can he be out of humour? Is it not absurd for him that is at peace with Heaven, with his own conscience, with all the world; for the possessor of the best goods, and the heir of a blessed immortality; for the friend, the favourite, the son of God, to fret or wail?

He that is settled in a most prosperous state, that is (if he pleaseth) secure of its continuance, that is well assured of its improvement; that hath whatever good he can wish in his reach, and more than he can conceive in sure reversion; what account can be given, that he should be sad, or seem afflicted?

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

He that hath the inexhaustible spring of good for his portion; that hath his welfare entrusted in God's most faithful hand; that hath God's infallible word for his support; that hath free access to him, *In whose presence is fulness of joy;* that hath frequent tastes of God's goodness, in gracious dispensations of providence, in intercourses of devotion, in the influences of grace; that hath the infinite beauty and excellency for the perpetual object of his contemplation and affection; that enjoyeth the serenity of a sound mind, of a pure heart, of a quiet conscience, of a sure hope, what can he want to refresh or comfort him? Ps. xvi. 11.

If a true and perfect Christian hath no care to distract him, having discharged all his concerns on God's providence; if he hath no fear to dismay him, being guarded by the Almighty protection from all danger and mischief; if he hath no despair to sink him, having a sure refuge in the divine mercy and help; if he hath no superstitious terrors or scruples to perplex him, being conscious of his own upright intentions to please God, and confident of God's merciful willingness to accept his sincere endeavours; if he hath no incurable remorse to torment him, the stings of guilt being pulled out by the merits of his Saviour, applied by his faith and repentance; if he hath no longing desires to disquiet him, being fully satisfied with that he doth possess, or may expect from God's bounty, all other things being far beneath his ambition or coveting; if he hath no contentions to inflame him, knowing nought here worth passionately striving for, and being resolved to hold a friendly good-will toward all men; if he hath no repining envy, seeing that

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

none can be more happy than he may be, and that every man's good by charity is made his own; if he hath no fretful discontent, since he gladly doth acquiesce in the condition and success allotted to him, resigning his will to God's pleasure, taking all for best which thence doth occur, being assured that all things shall work together for his good and advantage; if he hath no spiteful rancours to corrode his heart, no boisterous passions to ruffle his mind, no inordinate appetites, perverse humours, or corrupt designs to distemper his soul and disturb his life, whence then may sorrow come, or how can sadness creep into him[c]?

Rom. viii. 28.

What is there belonging to a Christian, whence grief naturally can spring? From God, our exceeding joy, the fountain of happiness; from heaven, the region of light and bliss; from divine truth, which illustrateth and cheereth the soul; from God's law, which rejoiceth the heart, and is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; from wisdom, *Whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace;* from virtue, which cureth our afflictive distempers, and composeth our vexatious passions; from these things, I say, about which a Christian as such is only conversant, no sorrow can be derived; from those sweet sources no bitter streams can flow: but hell, the flesh, the world, darkness, error, folly, sin, and irreligion, (things with which a Christian should have nothing to do, from which he should keep aloof, which he doth pretend utterly to renounce and abandon,) these, these alone, are the parents of discomfort and anguish.

Ps. xliii. 4; xix. 8, 10; cxix. 103. Prov. iii. 17.

[c] Ἐπιθυμίας οὖν ἀπελαθείσης εὔδιος ἡ ψυχή, καὶ γαληνιῶσα γίνεται. —Just. Mart. ad Græc. Orat. cap. v. [Opp. p. 5 B.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

Wherefore there is the same reason, the same obligation, the same possibility, that we should rejoice evermore*, as that we should always be Christians, exactly performing duty, and totally

---

* We must, I say, rejoice always, although not with all sorts of joy; for there are joys improper for us, and unworthy of us; which, therefore, are not allowed to us; which, indeed, are inconsistent with that true, and that continual joy, which our text prescribeth: there are vain and childish, there are sordid and brutish, there are wicked and satanic joys, *There is a laughter of fools, like to the crackling of thorns;* and a wild impertinent mirth, on which the Royal preacher did reflect, *I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doth it?* there is a joy attending on folly itself, for *Folly*, saith he, *is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom;* that is, nothing is so wretchedly mean, or pitifully silly, in which vain men will not please themselves; as we see children find great delight in any worthless trifles, in the images of business, in little contentions and petty victories: very like to which are most of the pleasures, which the sons of men do affect and pursue.

Eccles. vii. 6; ii. 2. Prov. xv. 21;

There are also those of a worse temper, who (as the same wise observer telleth us) *Rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;* there is a joy of the envious in seeing calamities, and of the malicious in doing mischief: a joy of the revengeful in wreaking his spite, and beholding his enemy to fall; a joy of the unjust dealer in fraudulent overreaching those who trade with him; of the sycophant in undermining his neighbour by slander or detraction; of the flatterer in abusing the simplicity of his friend, or patron, by feigned commendations.

ii. 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Prov. xvii. 5; xxiv. 17. Job xxxi. 29;

There is a joy of the luxurious epicure in his riotous excesses, of the wanton in his lewd embraces, of the ambitious in driving on his unwieldy projects, and reflecting on his success, his power and pomp, the acclamations and respects offered to him; of the covetous in viewing his crammed bags, his full barns, his large hoards, and thereon blessing his soul.

xxxi. 25. Eccles. v. 2. Luke xii. 29.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

forbearing sin; for innocence and indolency do ever go together, both together making paradise; perfect virtue and constant alacrity are inseparable companions, both constituting beatitude: and as,

---

There is a joy of the vain wit in his frothy conceits, of the dissolute ruffian in his mad frolics, of the atheistical scoffer in his profane raillery.

Every vice hath a charm of joy alluring to it, and detaining in it, otherwise no man would be captivated by a thing so ugly, so noisome, so disgraceful, and so incommodious to him.

These are spurious and fallacious joys; in their nature fond or foul and base, in their degree lame and imperfect, in their consistence flashy and brittle, in their duration flitting and fading, in their result bitter and loathsome; their enjoyment is tempered with regret of heart, it is easily dashed by any cross accident, it soon warpeth into a nauseous satiety; they in the end degenerate into gall, and grievous anguish; for as it is said in Job concerning every sinful voluptuary, *Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth, yet his meat in his bowels is turned; it is the gall of asps within him;* and as Solomon observeth of such joy, *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*

Joel i. 12.

Job xx. 12—14.

Prov. xiv. 13.

They are like the body in which they reside, and whereon they depend, very loose, fluid, and frail; consisting in slight touches upon the organs of sense, in frisks of the corporeal spirits, in luscious steams infecting the imagination; the causes, the objects, the occasions of them are very contingent and mutable; whence they presently flag, evaporate, and expire.

Wherefore we should not, if we could, and we could not, if we would, constantly entertain such joys; to do so is equally unreasonable and impossible.

But the joy recommended to us is quite of another nature and stamp; it is a worthy and pure, a full and complete, a grave, sober, and masculine, a solid, substantial, firm, and

John xvi. 24; xv. 11.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

although from our infirmity we cannot attain the highest pitch of virtue, yet we must aspire thereto, endeavouring to perfect holiness in the fear of God; so, though it may not be possible to get, yet it is reasonable to seek perpetual joy; which doing in the right way, we shall not fail of procuring a good measure of it. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Matt. v. 48. 1 John iii. 3.

Indeed, to exercise piety and to rejoice are the same things, or things so interwoven, that nothing can disjoin them; religious practice is like that *River, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High,* that is, every pious soul. No good deed can be performed without satisfaction; each virtue hath a peculiar delight annexed to it: whence the acts of joy, which upon various objects, grounds, and occasions, we may exert, being numberless, I shall only touch a few principal instances. Ps. xlvi. 4.

I. We should evermore rejoice in the exercise of our faith; according to that prayer of our Apostle

---

steady joy; deeply rooted in the heart, immoveably founded in the reason of things; permanent, like the immortal spirit wherein it dwelleth, and like the eternal objects on which it is fixed; which is safe from all attacks and impressions from without, (*A stranger intermeddling not with it*) which never fainteth or cloyeth; but is by lasting increased and strengthened; of which we can never repent, or be anywise bereaved, according to that of our Lord, *Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.* Prov. xiv. 10. John xvi. 22.

We therefore may well rejoice evermore with such a joy, or rather with such joys, for there are many of them (to be exerted upon various grounds, objects, and occasions), some of which I shall touch, declaring how we may and should have them. MS.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

for the Romans, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.*

Rom. xv. 13.

Every kind of faith (that which embraceth divine truths, that which applieth God's mercy, that which ensureth God's promises, that which confideth in God's providence, each of them) is a clear spring of joy, ever standing open to us; which he that drinketh shall never thirst.

John vi. 35; vii. 38; iv. 14.

1 The faith which embraceth God's heavenly truth doth not only enlighten our minds, but is apt to affect our hearts; there being no article of faith, or mystery of our Religion, which doth not involve some great advantage, some notable favour, some happy occurrence dispensed to us by the goodness of God, the which faith doth apprehend and convey to our spiritual gust, so that we cannot hardly but receive the word with joy. For is it not very sweet with faith to contemplate the rich bounty of God in the creation of the world, and producing so goodly a frame, so copious a store of things, with a special regard to our sustenance and accommodation? Is it not satisfactory to believe that God, by his almighty hand and vigilant care, with the same benign regard, doth uphold and govern the same? Is it not extremely pleasant with faith to reflect on that great honour and happiness, which God did vouchsafe to confer on mankind, by sending down from heaven his only Son to assume our nature, and to converse with men, that we might be advanced to a participation of the divine nature, and to an enjoyment of communion with God? How, without great delight, can we be persuaded, that our Saviour, by his meritorious obedience and passion, hath appeased God's

Matt. xiii. 20.

Phil. i. 25.

2 Pet. i. 4.

1 John i. 3.

Digitized by Google

wrath, and inclined his favour toward us, hath satisfied justice, hath expiated our offences, hath ransomed and rescued our souls from the dominion of sin and Satan, from death and corruption, from hell and everlasting torment, hath purchased immortal life and endless bliss for us? What comfort is there in being assured[d], by the resurrection and triumph of our Lord over death, that our souls are indeed immortal, that our bodies shall be raised from the dust, that our persons are capable of an eternal subsistence in happiness? Will it not much please us with an eye of faith to behold our Redeemer sitting in glorious exaltation at God's right hand, governing the world for the benefit of his church, dispensing benediction and grace to us; interceding, as our merciful and faithful High Priest, for the pardon of our sins, the acceptance of our prayers, the supply of our needs, and the relief of our distresses? If we be fully convinced, that our Lord Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and Saviour, *The author of eternal salvation to all that obey him,* how can we otherwise than follow those, of whom St Peter saith, *Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?* So from the hearty belief of every evangelical truth we may suck consolation; each of them is food of our soul; and to believe it is to eat it[e]: which how can we do without a delicious or most savoury relish?

SERM. XXXIX.

Heb. ii. 17. 1 John ii. 1.

Heb. v. 9.

1 Pet. i. 8.

2 At least, methinks, that faith greatly should exhilarate us, which applieth those verities, (so

[d] Εἰδότες.—2 Cor. iv. 14.

[e] Crede et manducasti.—Aug. [In Johan. Evang. c. VI. Tract. XXV. § 12. Ed. Par. 1679—1700. Tom. III. Pt. ii. col. 489.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

worthy of all acceptation,) wherein God doth open his arms wide to embrace us, proposing most kind
1 Tim. i. 15. invitations and favourable overtures of mercy, upon the fairest terms possible; together with effectual remedies for all the maladies and miseries of our souls: for if we are sensible of our heinous guilts, if we are laden with the heavy burden of our sins, if our heart is galled with sore compunction for our misdeeds, if we are struck with the
2 Cor. v. 11. terrors of the Lord, and tremble with the fear of
Ps. xxxviii. 1; vi. 1; cii. 4; cxliii. 4; cxix. 120. God's judgments; how comfortable must it be to be persuaded, that God is fully reconcileable to us, is very desirous to shew us mercy, and gladly will
1 John ii. 1, 2. accept our repentance; that, *We have an advocate with the Father, who hath propitiated for our sins,* doth mediate for our peace, hath both full power and certain will, if we sincerely do renounce our
Rom. viii. 1; offences, wholly to remit them! so that, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but*
v. 1. *after the spirit;* and that, *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus*
Ps. li. 8; xc. 8, 14. *Christ.* Will not this belief revive us, and make the broken bones to rejoice? will not the Gospel of peace be hence in truth a joyful sound to us? might it not hence well be proclaimed in the Pro-
Isai. xl. 1, 2. phet, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned?*

And if we find ourselves in habit of soul grievously distempered, labouring under great impotency and blindness, overborne and oppressed with the prevalency of corruption, pestered with

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

unreasonable desires and passions, unable to curb our inclinations and appetites, to resist temptations, to discharge our duty in any tolerable measure, or with any ease; is it not then comfortable to believe, that we have a most faithful and skilful physician at hand to cure our distempers; that we have a powerful succour within ken to relieve our infirmities; that God is ready to impart an abundant supply of grace, of light, of spiritual strength to direct and assist us; that, *If any man doth lack wisdom,* he is encouraged with faith *to ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not?* If any man want strength, God's Almighty Spirit is promised to those who with humble earnestness do implore it; so that, *We may be able to do all things* (incumbent on us) *by Christ who strengtheneth us.*

James i. 5, 6.

Luke xi. 13.

Phil. iv. 13. Rom. vii. 25. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 13.

3 And what more hearty satisfaction can we feel, than in a firm persuasion concerning the real accomplishment of those *Exceedingly great and precious promises,* whereby we become capable of the most excellent privileges, the most ample benefits, the most happy rewards that can be? How can the belief, that, by God's infallible word, or as surely as truth itself is true, an eternal inheritance of a treasure that cannot fail, of a glory that cannot fade, of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, of a felicity surpassing all expression and all conceit, is reserved for us, in recompense of our faithful obedience; how, I say, can that be a dead, dull, dry belief, void of sprightly comfort and pleasure?

2 Pet. i. 4.

Likewise, the faith of confidence in God's good providence and paternal care over us, (whatever our condition or circumstances be,) should infuse a cheerful refreshment of heart into us.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

It is in holy scripture most frequently asserted, that he who placeth his trust in God is a very blessed and happy person; and can we, without great satisfaction, partake of that beatitude?

Can we, by such a trust, disburden all our solicitous cares, all our anxious fears, all the troubles of our spirit, and pressures of our condition upon God, with strong assurance, that from his mighty power and watchful care, in due time, in the most expedient manner, we shall receive a competent supply of our wants, a riddance from our grievances, a protection from all danger and harm, a blessing upon all our good endeavours and undertakings, without feeling much ease and peace in our hearts?

What can be more cheering than a persuasion, that all our concerns are lodged in the hands of such a Friend, so wise, so able, so faithful, so affectionate, so ever readily disposed to help us and further our good? They who trust in God are said to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and to be covered with his wings; God is often styled their rock, their fortress, their shield and buckler, their defence and refuge; and are they not then impregnably safe? why then should they fear any disaster? at what occurrence should they be disturbed? Have they not huge reason to say with the Psalmist, *In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice; The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him.* May not each of those confiders in God well repress all insurrections of trouble and grief with that holy charm, *Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted*

Ps. xci. 1; lxi. 4; xci. 4; lvii. 1; xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7; xviii. 2; lxii. 2;

cxii. 2; lxiii. 7; xxviii. 7; xxxiii. 21;

xlii. 14; xliii. 5.

Digitized by Google

within me? O trust in God... for he is the health of my countenance, and my God.

II. We should evermore rejoice in the practice of Christian hope, making good that aphorism of Solomon, *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness;* and obeying those apostolical injunctions, that, *We should rejoice in hope;* that, *We should retain the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end.* Those excellent and most beneficial truths, those sweet proposals of grace and mercy, those rich promises, which faith doth apprehend as true in a general reference to all Christians, hope doth appropriate and apply as particularly touching ourselves; improving the knowledge of our common capacity into a sense of our special interest in them. God, saith our faith, will assuredly receive all penitent sinners to mercy, will crown all pious Christians with glory, will faithfully perform whatever he hath graciously promised to all people, hath a tender care for all that love and fear him; but God, saith our hope, will have mercy on me, will render to me the wages of righteousness, will verify his good word to me his servant, will protect, will deliver, will bless me in all exigencies: if so, being conscious of our sincere endeavour to serve and please God; if discerning, from a careful reflection upon our heart and ways, that, in some good measure, with fidelity and diligence we have discharged the conditions required of us, we can entitle ourselves to God's special affection, we can accommodate his word to our case, we can assume a propriety in his regard, how can we forbear conceiving joy?

Prov. x. 28. Rom. xii. 12. Heb. iii. 6. 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Kings viii. 26.

All hope, in proportion to the worth of its object, and the solidity of its ground, is comfortable,

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

it being *The anchor of the soul,* which stayeth and supporteth it in undisturbed rest; it appeasing unquiet desires; it setting absent goods before us, and anticipating future enjoyments by a sweet foretaste[f]: seeing then, if we have a good conscience, and *Our heart doth not condemn us,* our hope is grounded on *The Rock of ages,* (on the immutable nature and the infallible word of God;) seeing it is the hope of the most worthy, the most sublime, the most incomparable and inestimable goods, it must be most extremely delightful.

Heb. vi. 19.

1 John iii. 21. Isai. xxvi. 4.

If it much pleaseth men to conceit themselves next heirs of a fair estate, to have the reversion of a good office, to be probable expectants of a great preferment, (although death may intercept, or other accidents may obstruct the accomplishment of such hopes,) how much more shall that *Lively hope,* of which St Peter speaketh, *of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,* (which hope therefore can never be dashed or defeated,) breed a most cheerful satisfaction, far transcending all other pleasures, which spring from the most desirable fruitions here; according to that admonition of our Lord, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven**.

1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

Luke x. 20.

---

* III. We should evermore rejoice in a grateful resentment of God's goodness, expressed in conferring benefits upon

[f] Ἅμα καὶ πρὸ τοῦ παραστῆναι ὑπόσχεσιν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας, αὐτὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τῇ ἐλπίδι γαυρουμένη εὐφραίνεται.—Const. Ap. VII. 33. [Cot. Pat. Apost. Tom. I. p. 373.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

III. We should evermore rejoice in the performing the duty of charity; both that which we owe to God, and that which is due to our neighbour.

---

us. *O taste and see* (saith the Psalmist) *that the Lord is good:* in the experience of divine beneficence we do taste and see God's goodness; and how can we relish so very sweet a thing, how can we view so fair an object without pleasure? Upon the favour of God all our good dependeth, it is the foundation of our welfare, it is the source of all our comfort; in the fruition and sense of it the highest felicity consisteth, how then can we without joyful complacency reflect on any testimony thereof? Ps. xxxiv. 8.

The benefits of God (whether by nature, or by providence, or by grace, dispensed to us) are in themselves so considerable, that they well may satisfy us; but they should more abundantly please us, as they come from him, as expressions of his goodness, as arguments of his favourable regard towards us. For if the favour of a mortal creature having any slim participation of resemblance of Divine Majesty, when it discloseth itself in a smile, in a kind word, in an affable gesture, doth even yield a pleasing content, how much more should it ravish us to find, that the sovereign Lord of all things doth condescend to mind us, doth vouchsafe to concern himself for our good. How can we rightly understand the benefits of God, or worthily prize them, or heartily like them, or thankfully accept and embrace them, without joy? seeing joy is a natural result of our obtaining that, which we do apprehend good, which we do approve and esteem, which we affect and desire.

For want of this a benefit is diminished, is spoiled, is nullified; joy being that which maketh good to be good to us; rendering our state better, and in proportion more happy. Wherefore God would have us to rejoice in the perception of his benefits, and he no less loveth a cheerful receiver than a cheerful giver.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

Love is the sweetest and most delectable of all passions; and when, by the conduct of wisdom, it is directed in a rational way toward a worthy, congruous, attainable object, it cannot otherwise than fill the heart with ravishing delight.

And such (in all respects superlatively such) an object is God: he infinitely beyond all other things deserveth our affection, as most perfectly amiable and desirable, as having obliged us by innumerable and inestimable benefits, all the good that we have ever enjoyed, or that we can ever expect, being derived from his pure bounty; all things in the world, in competition with him, being pitifully mean, ugly, and loathsome; all things, without him, being vain, unprofitable, and hurtful to us; so that the Psalmist might well say, *Who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the*

Ps. lxxxix. 6.

To be sad when God is kind, to lour and frown when he is pleased to smile upon us, is a very perverse crossness to his intent, an untoward abuse of his goodness, a plain argument of wretched stupidity, or vile ingratitude. For gratitude is a very pleasant duty, involving the exercise of our best affections; of a reverent love to the benefactor, of a satisfactory complacence in his goodwill towards us, of entertaining the benefit with a just valuation and kind acceptance.

Whence it commonly breedeth an exultation of spirit, and naturally dischargeth itself in songs of praise; *I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me*, is a text, whereon, in a manner, the whole Book of Psalms is the descant.

Ps. xiii. 6.

So that, if we can observe that other precept of St Paul, enjoining us *To give thanks always*, we consequently shall perform this of *Evermore rejoicing*. MS.

Eph. v. 20.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I can desire beside thee. He is the most proper object of our love; for we chiefly were framed, and it is the prime law of our nature, to love him; our soul from original instinct vergeth toward him as its centre, and can have no rest till it be fixed on him; he alone can satisfy the vast capacity of our minds, and fill our boundless desires.

Ps. lxxiii. 25.

Matt. xxii. 38.

He, of all lovely things, most certainly and easily may be attained; for, whereas commonly men are crossed in their affection, and their love is imbittered from their affecting things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or coy things, which disdain and reject their affection; it is concerning God quite otherwise: for,

He is most ready to impart himself, and will not reject any that cometh unto him; he most earnestly desireth and wooeth our love; he is not only most willing to correspond in affection, but doth prevent us therein, for, *We love him,* saith the apostle, *because he first loved us.*

John vi. 37. Ps. lxx. 4. 2 Cor. v. 20. John xiv. 21, 23. Rev. iii. 20. 1 John iv. 19.

He doth cherish and encourage our love by sweetest influences and most comfortable embraces, by kindest expressions of favour, by most beneficial returns, ordering that *All things shall work together for good to those who love him:* and whereas all other objects do in the enjoyment much fail our expectation, he doth ever far exceed it.

Rom. viii. 28. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Wherefore, in all affectionate motions of our hearts toward God, in desiring him, or seeking his favour and friendship; in embracing him, or setting our esteem, our good-will, our confidence on him; in enjoying him by devotional meditations and

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

addresses to him; in a reflexive sense of our interest and propriety in him; in that mysterious union of spirit, hereby we do closely adhere to him, and are, as it were, inserted in him; in a hearty complacence in his benignity, a grateful resentment of his kindness, and a zealous desire of yielding some requital for it, we cannot but feel very pleasant transports, assuring to us the truth of that saying in the Psalm, *They that love thy name shall be joyful in thee;* and disposing us to cry out with the Psalmist, *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O Lord! Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

1 Cor. vi. 17. Acts xi. 23. Deut. x. 20. John xv. 4, 6. Ps. v. 11; xxxvi. 7; lxiii. 3.

Indeed that celestial flame (kindled in our hearts by the spirit of love) cannot be void of warmth; we cannot fix our eyes upon infinite beauty, we cannot taste infinite sweetness, we cannot cleave to infinite felicity, without we should also perpetually rejoice in the first daughter of love to God, charity toward men; the which in complexion and cheerful disposition doth most resemble its mother: for it doth rid all those gloomy, keen, turbulent imaginations and passions, which cloud our mind, which fret our heart, which discompose the frame of our soul, (from burning anger, from storming contention, from gnawing envy, from rankling spite, from racking suspicion, from distracting ambition and avarice). It consequently doth settle our mind in an even temper, in a sedate humour, in an harmonious order, in that pleasant state of tranquillity, which naturally doth result from the voidance of irregular passions.

And who can enumerate or express the pleasures which do await on every kind, on each act of charity?

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

How triumphant a joy is there in anywise doing good! whereby we feel good humour, and gratify our best inclinations; whereby we oblige our brethren, and endear ourselves to them; whereby we most resemble the divine goodness, and attract the divine favour.

St Paul telleth us, that, *God loveth a cheerful giver;* and he prescribeth, that, *He who sheweth mercy* should do it ἐν ἱλαρότητι, *with merriness;* and in the Law it is commanded, *Thine heart shall not grieve when thou givest to thy poor brother:* and who, indeed, can out of charity give alms or shew mercy without cheerfulness? seeing that he thereby doth satisfy his own mind, and doth ease his own bowels; considering that, in doing good to his neighbour, he receiveth far more good to himself; that he then doth put forth his stock to very great and most certain advantage; that he dischargeth an office very acceptable to God, doth much oblige him, and render him a debtor, doth engage him abundantly to requite and reward that beneficence.

2 Cor. ix. 7. Rom. xii. 8. Deut. xv. 10. Ecclus. xxxv. 10.

What satisfaction is there in forgiving offences! whereby we discharge our souls from vexatious inmates, (black thoughts and rancorous animosities;) whereby we clear ourselves from the troubles attending feuds and strifes; whereby we imitate our most gracious Creator, and transcribe the pattern of our meek Redeemer; whereby we render ourselves capable of divine mercy, and acquire a good title to the pardon of our own sins; according to that divine word, *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you.*

Matt. xi. 25; xxv. 35.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

How unconfinedly and inexhaustibly vast is that delight, which a charitable complacence in the good of our neighbour (a rejoicing with those that rejoice) may afford! a man thence engrossing all the good in the world, and appropriating to himself all the prosperous successes, all the pleasant entertainments, all the comfortable satisfactions of his neighbour. Even a charitable sympathy, or condolency, in the adversities of our neighbour, is not destitute of content; for the soul is thereby melted into a gentle temper, susceptive of the best impressions; we share in the comfort which we minister to others; we are refreshed in that kindly submission to the good pleasure of God, in that lightsome contemplation of God's mercy, in those comfortable hopes of a happy issue, which we suggest to the afflicted[s]; we thence are disposed to a grateful sense of God's goodness, in preserving ourselves from those calamities, and in qualifying us to comfort our brethren; we feel satisfaction in reflecting upon this very practice, and observing that we do act conformably to good-nature, to the dictates of reason, to the will of God, therein discharging a good conscience, and enjoying a portion of that continual feast.

Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Rom. xii. 15. 2 Cor. i. 6; vii. 7. Prov. xv. 15.

I should, if the time would permit, further declare, how we should find delight in the contemplation of all God's attributes, of his works, of his word; in thankful resentment of all God's benefits; in willing obedience to all God's laws; how joy is a proper fruit growing on the practice of humility, of justice, of temperance, of devotion, of every virtue and grace: more particularly I should have

[s] Συμπαρακληθῆναι.—Rom. i. 12.

Digitized by Google

evidenced how, from a patient submission to God's afflicting hand, from penitential contrition of heart for our sins, from a pious fear and solicitude in working out our salvation, most sweet consolations (so tempering those ingredients, as to render their bitterness very savoury) may spring: but in recommending joy I would not produce grief; and therefore shall not further annoy your patience. SERM. XXXIX.

[A second Sermon on the same text, *Rejoice evermore*, was evidently contemplated, and partially written by Barrow. From the imperfect draught the following paragraphs, numbered as in the original MS., are now for the first time printed.]

VI. We should ever rejoice in our devotional addresses to God, and intercourse with him. We are in Scripture frequently moved to incessant devotion, and in discharging that duty we may perpetually rejoice; devotion rightly performed (with a due sense of what we do, and a careful attention thereto) being of all things that we can do, the most pleasant, and productive of joy.

The coming from a converse with creatures into the presence of God, is like the coming out of a chill place into the warm sun, very comfortable, and doth infuse cheer into our hearts; for, *In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* The light of God's countenance, which most shineth on men in their approaches to him, is ever joined with the warmth of gladness, *Blessed* (saith the Psalmist) *is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; In thy name shall they rejoice all the day;* and, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, and thou hast made him* (the King) *exceeding glad with thy countenance.* Ps. xvi. 11; lxxxix. 15, 16; iv. 6; xxi. 6.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

The pouring out our hearts before God, the discharging our souls of its cares and burthens, of its troubles and sorrows, into the bosom of the most faithful, the most kind, the most tender-hearted friend, hath great consolation; to the which therefore, all persons (especially those who are pious) naturally have recourse, according to that practice of the Psalmist, *I poured out my complaint before him, I shewed before him my trouble: when my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.* And according to that admonition, *Trust in him at all times, ye people: pour out your hearts before him. God is a refuge for us.*

Ps. cxlii. 2; lxii. 8;

The fervency of desire, quickened with a hope of obtaining what we need; the seeking a supply of our wants, a deliverance from our straits, an assistance in our proceedings, a good success of our endeavours, with a good assurance of finding it, doth afford much delight; whence, *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord; Let those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee;* the prayer for it doth imply the due consequence of it.

cv. 3; lxx. 4; xl. 16.

The offering of praises to God, for his superlative excellencies, for the emanations of his transcendent goodness, for his glorious works of power and wisdom, (wherein our hearts are fixed on the fairest and sweetest objects that can be) how pleasant it is, seeing it doth constitute the beatitude of heaven, and is the incessant work of angels, who without satiety or weariness, do *Never rest day or night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.* How well, therefore, might the Psalmist say, *I will be glad and rejoice in thee, I will sing praise unto thy name, O thou Most High; My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord; Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.*

Rev. iv. 8. Ps. ix. 2; lxiii. 5; xxvii. 6; xcv. 2.

The very confession of our sins, of our infirmities and defects, of our spiritual wants; the laying open the wounds and distempers of our soul, before our most skilful and faithful Physician (together with imploring pardon and grace to heal them), is very comfortable; it was not without com-

Digitized by Google

fort that David said, (*I said*) *Lord, be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.*

The illapses of God's Holy Spirit (the blessed Comforter) those beams of heavenly light darted into our minds, those touches of the divine finger warbling on the heart-strings, those consolations whereby God is pleased to encourage those, who with humble reverence approach and apply themselves to him, how do they beyond expression melt a devout soul with ravishing transports of affection! Ps. xli. 4;

Wherefore with great reason those excellent masters and patterns of devotion did so willingly, so gladly apply themselves to it; preferring it before any other employment or entertainment; *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord: My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness: One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* Well might he assert, well might he promise, concerning devout people, *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* cxxii. 1; lxxxiv. 2, 10; xxvii. 4; xxxvi. 8.

Well might he invite and provoke men to devotion in such terms as these, *O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation: Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.* Ps. xcv. 1. c. 2.

Indeed, no man ever unwillingly, or uncheerfully doth go into the presence of a person whom he loveth; no man without satisfaction and pleasure doth entertain conversation with his dear friend.

And if there hath been in the world a prince, of that benignity and sweetness, as to obtain a commendation that he let none go sad out of his presence[a]; how much less will the infinite goodness of God suffer any man (who with

[a] Neminem a se tristem dimisit.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

hearty faith and humble reverence doth address to him) to leave him without having received satisfaction?

VII. We should continually rejoice in paying our due obedience to the will and law of God.

The laws of God in themselves are very pleasant; as approved by the mind, and agreeable to reason; as carrying much tranquillity, much security, much sweetness in the practice of them; as producing good fruits, and being attended with consequences very satisfactory; (as enlightening, enlarging, enriching, ennobling, and embellishing the soul, the person, the life of him that observeth them, with the most useful conveniences, and with the most graceful ornaments); as voiding manifold evils, grievances, and troubles; according to that of the Psalmist, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb; and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

Ps. xix. 7—11.

Obedience, therefore, hath a direct, innate, absolute pleasure contained in it, going with it, and following it; there is also great satisfaction arising from reflections of soul upon it; for, who would not delight in serving so kind, so good, so munificent a Master? who protecteth so surely, who feedeth so plentifully, who clotheth so handsomely, who payeth so large wages to his servants? who treateth them as friends, yea as children?

No man, while he is practising obedience, can without glee consider, that he then acteth wisely and soberly, that he is performing his duty, and driving on his true interest, that he is pleasing God, and executing the will of his Lord, his Judge, his Rewarder; that he is walking in the paths of life, and earning the wages of happiness, and treasuring up to himself a good foundation for eternity; that he is escaping the most dismal mischief naturally and justly consequent on disobedience; regret of mind, the wrath and

1 Tim. vi. 19.

Digitized by Google

displeasure of God, the judgment and vengeance to come, eternal shame and woe. SERM. XXXIX.

No man, after a careful and faithful observance of God's law, can without delight review it; he will have the steady pleasure of a good conscience, attended with a comfortable hope; he will entertain himself with that continual feast of a merry heart; a heart therefore truly merry, because it doth not condemn the person of having neglected his duty, and betrayed his welfare; according to that of St Paul, *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* Prov. xv. 15. 1 John iii. 21. 2 Cor. i. 12.

As there is no victory so glorious, so there is none so joyous, and which yieldeth such exultation, such triumph, as that over vices, over appetites, over passions, over temptations, over the spiritual enemies, which war against our soul, and impugn our salvation, which seduce us from God and our duty.

Hence it is the character and property of a good man, that *He greatly delighteth in God's commandments; That the commandments are not grievous to him.* Ps. i. 2; cxii. 1; cxix. 16.

Hence it is said that, *It is joy to the just to do judgment;* that, *They have great peace who love God's law, and nothing shall offend them;* that, *The ways of wisdom* (or piety) *are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;* that, *The yoke of our Lord is easy, and his burden light;* and that, *Whoever taketh his yoke on him shall find rest to his soul;* that, *The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever.* 1 John v. 3. Prov. xxi. 15. Ps. cxix. 165. Prov. iii. 17. Matt. xi. 30, 29. Isai. xxxii. 17.

So obedience in general doth yield joy, and comfort; and to every part thereof, to the practice of each virtue, there are some peculiar delights annexed; we have particularly seen it in those of faith, of hope, of love to God; and easily we may discern it in other virtues, if we do but cast a glance on them.

How sweet is meekness! or that temper of soul, which keepeth us from being soon exasperated, or easily inflamed 1 Pet. iii. 5.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

with anger; from being apt to take things ill, to be sorely offended with any cross occurrence, to resent deeply any provocation; from harbouring any rancorous grudge, or hatching any spiteful design. How doth it keep sorrow from the heart; how doth it quench froward and fretful humours, which gnaw the soul; how doth it smother enmities and contentions; how doth it prevent the troubles and mischiefs issuing thence! While it keepeth us from being hurtful or offensive to others, doth it not free us from being troubled or grieved ourselves? While it allayeth our resentments of evil, doth it not in effect remove them, or bereave them of their poison and their sting? To him that taketh all things well, what can happen ill? When the mind is calm and serene; not ruffled or clouded with any peevish humour, with any boisterous passion, with any mischievous intent, how can any sorrow or anguish have any place there?

How satisfactory is contentedness! the great elixir, the universal remedy of evil; which rendereth all events either most acceptable, or very tolerable; which savoureth the best in every condition, and distasteth not the worst; which, by closing with God's will, doth enjoy its own, which, by suiting its desire to things, doth accommodate things to its desire; which rendereth us in effect happy, because satisfied, and not affecting a change.

How delectable is humility! the which suppressing vain conceits, fond admiration, doating affection toward ourselves, together with perverse sturdiness of will, and haughty stomach, doth preserve us from distempered humours and inflammations of mind, from being grievously afflicted with any disappointments and disasters; from taking some offence at men's deportment or dealing with us; from being disturbed by imaginary wants, or indignities befalling us; for having true, that is, mean and modest judgments of ourselves, being sensible of our own infirmities and defects, we shall quietly comport with all events arriving to us, and whatever dealing we meet with, as not being worse than we deserve. It will not much offend us, if every thing do

Digitized by Google

not hit according to our fancy or desire; if men dissent from our opinion, or cross our humour; if they do not yield us respect, if they do not comply with our pleasure; we cannot think men hereby do us much wrong, or great discourtesy, seeing we cannot pretend to much regard or deference; at least we do not merit anything better from God, (being less than the least of all his mercies) *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed*, and have reason to acquiesce in his providence. Whence our mind, not swelling against men, and submitting to God, will enjoy a sweet rest and peace; it will happen according to that of the Prophet, *The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

Gen. xxxii. 10. Lam. iii. 22.

Isai. xxix. 19.

How cheerful is temperance! which keepeth the body in sound health, in right temper, in good tune; a fit instrument of the mind, for discharging its functions of reason and wisdom, in prosecution of what is good and profitable for us; which enjoying the good things bestowed by the divine liberality on us, in that way and measure which God did intend and reason doth approve, doth find them true enjoyments; as innocent and safe, so also very pleasant and savoury; which preventing the redundance of crude humours and turbulent spirits, subtracting the fuel of lust and passion, doth preserve the soul in a still, clear, and sedate condition; which freeth us from painful surfeits, from irksome satieties, from the grievous aches, and vexatious diseases, which follow all kinds of intemperance.

How pleasant is justice! which dealing fairly, rendering every man his due, observing laws and contracts, doth keep the practiser of it in quiet at home and abroad[b]; so that he is not engaged in vexatious quarrels and suits; is not entangled with cares to maintain his injuries; is not persecuted

[b] Δικαιοσύνης καρπὸς μέγιστος ἀταραξία —Epicurus apud Clem. Alexand. Str. VI. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 751]

Βέβαιον ἕξεις τὸν βίον δίκαιος ὢν
Χωρίς τε θορύβου καὶ φόβου ζήσεις καλῶς.

Aristoph. Ibid.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

with clamours and complaints; is not exposed to that shame and disgrace which ever follow dishonesty; is not rejected from conversation and commerce, (for none willingly have to do with unjust persons) is not forced or at least obliged to restitution.

Charity is very joyful, as voiding all disquieting and fretting dispositions of soul; shifting anger, banishing envy, suppressing revenge, casting out *Fear, which*, as St John saith, *hath torment*.

1 John iv. 18.

It settleth our mind in a sweet, calm, serene state; in an even temper.

VIII. We should ever rejoice in the patient sustaining all crosses, adversities, afflictions incident to us[c].

It may be excepted against this precept, that it is not seasonable, that it is not proper or comely (yea, that it is scarce possible) in such cases. A man should conform his mind to his condition and circumstances; seeing then, *There is*, the Wise Man saith, *not only a time to laugh and to dance; but a time also to weep and to mourn;* seeing there are junctures when *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning;* seeing *God*, as it is in the Prophet, *sometimes doth call to weeping and to mourning, to baldness and to girding with sackcloth;* seeing, it is the Wise Man's advice, *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider*, or reflect with sober sadness on your condition, is it not absurd then to rejoice?

Eccles. iii. 4; vii. 4. Isai. xxii. 12. Eccles. vii. 14.

Yea, how can we do it, if we would, when our nature doth forbid it; when our body is tortured with pain, when our mind is disturbed with molestations of care, and fear, and anxiety; when our case is really sad and lamentable; how can a man rejoice, who is sorely pinched with want of things needful, who is grievously afflicted with disease; who is extremely disappointed of his hopes and defeated in his endeavours, ungratefully abused, scornfully despised, basely defamed, wrongfully oppressed, cruelly persecuted, who is bereaved of his goods, of his honours, of his friends, of every comfort? Will not nature in such cases extort sorrow from

Ps. cxxiii. 4; cii. 6; xxii. 6; xliv. 13, 25.

[c] Vid. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιη'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 586.]

Digitized by Google

us; is it not absurd to expect joy then? Shall we not be forced to do as David did, *Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction; I mourn in my complaint, and am vexed, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness?* May we not as Hezekiah, chatter like a crane or a swallow, and mourn as a dove? Can we forbear to resent, as Job did, the extremity of misfortune; or to lament with Jeremy in the depth of affliction?

Ps. cxvi. 3; lxxxviii. 9; lv. 2, 3; lxix. 20. Isai. xxxviii. 14. Job iii. 20—24; vi. 2—10. Lam. iii. 1.

There is much plausible appearance in this discourse; yet, notwithstanding, in such cases we should, and may rejoice; it is reasonable, it is laudable, it is very feasible to do it, for,

If we consider, that all such events (how cross soever to our carnal sense, or corrupt fancy) are disposed to us by a most wise, most just, most gracious hand, with best intentions, to the best purposes; that they proceed from love, and conduce to our good: if we consider, that afflictions do not rise from the dust, or issue from a blind chance, but are dispensed to us by deepest counsel, and from the will of our best friend, and consequently must needs be very wholesome and profitable to us: if we consider, that they are meant, and do serve, to instruct and improve our minds, to correct and polish our manners, to exercise and prove our virtues, (especially our love of God, our faith in him, our hope); to cleanse and refine us from the dross of carnal and worldly affections, to withdraw us from that friendship of the world which is enmity to God, a fond admiration, and fast adherence to these inferior sensible things; to shew us the legitimate sons of God upon whom he vouchsafeth to bestow his fatherly chastisement; to endear us to God; to prepare us by sowing in tears to reap in joy; assuring our title to future joy, and enhancing our reward: if, I say, we do contemplate and weigh these things, we cannot but see great cause to rejoice in any adversity; for, if a sickly person had offered to him a cup of physic, which assuredly would recover or confirm his health, would he not gladly take it down? if a poor wretch for a few stripes should have a fair

James iv. 4. Heb. xii. 8. Ps. cxxvi. 5. Matt. v. 12. James i. 12. 1 Pet. i. 7.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

estate conferred on him, would he not joyfully bear them? if any man for little pains had most ample wages proposed to him, would he not be fond of undergoing such pains? Good reason therefore had St James to exhort, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations* (or *troubles*); *knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience;* with good reason our Lord did command his disciples (in case of their being persecuted, reviled, and slandered), *Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.*

James i. 2, 3.

Matt. v. 12.

Well doth the Apostle to the Hebrews represent and determine the case, when he saith, *No chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

Heb. xii. 11.

If we consider also, that God will support us in afflictions, not permitting us to sink under them; for, *God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.*

Ps. lxi. 2; xxxiv. 17; lxxii. 2; cxvi. 3, 4. 1 Cor. x. 13.

That God will accompany the visitations of his hand with the consolations of his Holy Spirit, if we do patiently bear the one, and devoutly seek the other; for, *God is the fathers of pities, who comforteth us in all our tribulations.*

1 Thess. iv. 13.

2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 5.

That God in convenient time (when patience hath had its perfect work) will remove his hand, and relieve us from our distresses. It is very pleasant to foresee the time when a man shall say with David, *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy; for thou hast considered my trouble, thou hast known my soul in adversity.*

James i. 4.

Ps. xxxi. 7.

Shall we not have sufficient cause to rejoice?

John xvi. 20.

The very bearing of afflictions with patience, and willingly submitting to God's will, hath in it a comfortable satisfaction and sweetness, more exceeding the pleasure of any temporal prosperity; a man cannot without great content and ease say, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good to him: Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken: The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away;*

1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Kings xx. 19. Job i. 21.

Digitized by Google

blessed be the name of the Lord: Let not my will but thine be done. SERM. XXXIX.

Neither hath a sober and moderate resentment of temporal evils an inconsistency with spiritual joy; a man may feel pain, he may dislike cross occurrences; he may be displeased with injurious and unworthy dealings towards him; yet so that the comforts springing from contemplation of God, his truth, his law, his providence, from the satisfaction of his conscience, from the hopes of salvation, from the assurance of far better things appertaining to him than the world can bereave him of, from the apprehension of God's special favour and mercy even in those dispensations of providence, will temper and alleviate, will overbalance and depress sorrow, dejection, disconsolateness, and discouragement; so David saith of himself, *Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, yet thy commandments are my delight.* So the holy Apostles were, *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.* So St Paul saith, *I take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches, in necessities and persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.* So the primitive saints *Took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. They did greatly rejoice, although for a season* (as need was) *they were in heaviness through manifold temptation.*

Luke xxii. 42. John xvi. 33. Acts v. 41. Ps. xxxviii. 14. 2 Cor. vi. 10. 2 Cor. xii. 10. Heb. x. 34. 1 Pet. i. 6.

We may, indeed, even in those instances of holy men under the Law expressing their sorrowful resentment of extreme afflictions, we may discern lightsome flashes of joy; and that their complaints are mixed with a comfortable trust and hope in God.

Job, in the midst of all his mournful— could say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.*

Job xix. 25.

David, Ps. xxxviii. 15; xxxi. 14; cxvi. 7—10.

In the midst of the thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul. I am the man, said Jeremy, *that hath seen afflictions by the rod of his wrath. He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood;* but presently, *The Lord*, saith he, *is my portion; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.*

Ps. xciv. 19. Lam. iii. 1—15. Lam. iii. 24, 25.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

IX. We should ever rejoice in penitence for our sins.

The greatest exception to which (both as to its reasonableness and possibility) this precept is liable, is this, that
James iii. 2. we are sinners, and, *In many things*, as St James saith, *do offend all;* whence we are obliged, and it becometh us, to be heartily sorry, to be contrite and broken in spirit, to feel bitter remorse, to bewail our case; for,

Doth not all reason, all ingenuity and equity require sorrow for our sins? Can we love God, can we fear him, can we believe him to be most just, most powerful, most good without it? Can we be sensible of having grievously provoked God's displeasure, of having crossed his holy will, of having abused his great mercy and bounty; of having incurred most heinous guilt, and deserved most woful punishment, without sensible regret and sore anguish? Can we with a light heart apprehend ourselves exposed to the fierce wrath and severe judgment of the Almighty?

2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Is there not a *Godly sorrow*, ἡ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη, (or *a sorrow according to God;* according to God's law and will) which St Paul commendeth as conducing to repentance; producing diligence, confession (ἀπολογίαν), regret, fear, holy desire, pious zeal, just revenge?

Joel ii. 12, 13. Doth not God command us, that, *We turn unto him with weeping and mourning;* that, *We rend our hearts and turn*
James iv. 9. *unto him;* that, *We be afflicted and mourn and weep;* that, *Our laughter be turned to mourning, and our joy to heaviness?*

Isai. lxvi. 2. Hath not God a special regard to him, *Who is poor*, (or afflicted) *and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word?*

Isai. lvii. 15. Doth not he affirm, that *He dwelleth with him that is of a*
Ps. xxxiv. 18. *contrite and humble spirit?* Is not *The Lord nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite*
Ps. li. 17. *spirit?* Are not broken and contrite hearts the proper sacrifices of God, most grateful and acceptable to him?

Was holy David blameable, who so often in most dolorous terms doth bemoan his guilt, and his misery consequent on it? *There is*, said David, *no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sins; for mine iniquities are gone even over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me; my wounds*

Digitized by Google

stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness; I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me. When God is angry, should we not be grieved? when he doth avert his favour, have we not reason to be like the Psalmist? *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

Ps. xxxi. 10. Ps. xl. 12. Ps. xxx. 7.

If things are thus, how can we continually rejoice? is any joy consistent with so pungent sorrow? can one breast harbour guests so repugnant, so destructive each to other? And seeing we continually sin, have we not rather cause perpetually to mourn and grieve?

This objection is very shrewd, yet I answer to it,

1 The obstruction of joy by penitential sorrow is only accidental, and grounded upon a supposition of that which ought not to be, for we are commanded absolutely to rejoice always, but only to mourn in case of sin; that is a direct and primary duty, this a consequential and secondary one; the observation of that would prevent the need of this; if we would forbear the poison of sin, we should have no occasion for the antidote of contrition. In effect therefore, the precept to rejoice always doth imply a prohibition of ever sinning; and our obligation to mourn in consequence of our fault should not derogate from the duty which excludeth fault.

2 It is true that pure and perfect joy doth suppose innocence, and exclude sin; there can be no paradise here, because no perfect innocence, but yet true joy may be.

3 Supposing sin, I answer, that true joy is very consistent with contrition and godly sorrow; the state of a penitent may be really pleasant, as, according to the Wise Man, *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful*, so reciprocally in mourning the heart may be joyful. The very reflection upon our practice, that we are duly sensible of our sins, that

John xvi. 33. Prov. xiv. 13.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

we are displeased for offending God, (which is an argument of our love to him, and reverence of him) that we are concerned for the welfare of our souls (which is a sign of a sober mind, of true wisdom, of spiritual life in us) may greatly satisfy and please us.

The contemplation of God's mercy, of his gracious nature, of his favourable intentions, his readiness to embrace us upon repentance, and to bestow pardon upon us; of an atonement provided for us, of reconciliation offered to us, of a glorious advocate interceding for us, is very sweet and comfortable; what greater comfort can there be, than for a soul aggrieved with sense of guilt to hear those words of St John, *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins?*

1 John ii. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. 20.

Heb. iv. 16.

The liberty granted to us of suing to (addressing) the throne of grace, and pouring out our hearts before God in humble confessing of sin, and imploring mercy, is delectable, especially considering the promise annexed to it, that, *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Prov. xxviii. 13. 1 John i. 9.

The very tears of repentance have a balsamic, anodynous, refreshing, and healing virtue[d]; contrition, melting and mollifying the heart, doth render it susceptive of comfortable impressions, and giveth a delicious relish to the hope of mercy.

We may observe, that commonly the greatest pleasures in nature are those which are joined with some pain; emergency from any pressure, convalescency from a disease, evasion from a danger, recovery from lassitude, do yield more sensible delight than a perfect state of ease, of health, of safety, of rest: so, by penitence to be eased from the burden of sin, to recover from the distemper of it, to eschew the punishment of it, doth in a manner more please than to have continued in innocence.

[d] *Καθάπερ τῶν δένδρων αἱ ῥίζαι αὐταὶ μέν εἰσι πικραί, ἡδίστους δὲ ἡμῖν τοὺς καρποὺς φέρουσιν· οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἡ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη πολλὴν ἡμῖν οἴσει τὴν ἡδονήν.*—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιη'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 586.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

God himself is pleased to infuse the balm of consolation into a soul wounded with remorse for sin. *He* (saith the Psalmist) *healeth the broken hearted, and bindeth up their wounds; He reviveth the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones; He to them who mourn in Sion doth give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.* He entertaineth the returning prodigal with a delicious feast, and saith, *Bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.*

Ps. cxlvii. 3. Isai. lvii. 15. Ps. li. 8, 12. Isai. lxi. 3. Luke xv. 23, 32.

Our Lord himself has pronounced those happy who mourn: *Blessed are they who do mourn; for they shall be comforted.* And, if any mourners are happy, if any be qualified for comfort, it is those who grieve for having displeased God; their condition is, indeed, most sad as to the cause, but their heart may be joyful as to the consequence of their sorrow; the promise is most pertinent to them, *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.* We may derive pleasure even from the contemplation of our sins, of our defects, of our infirmities, as from deadly poisonous weeds honey is sucked.

Matt. v. 4. Ps. cxxvi. 5. 2Cor. xii. 9.

If we look on sin as implying folly, baseness, ingratitude, turpitude, it hath an ugly visage; if we look on it as begetting guilt, anger, a curse, and vengeance, its aspect is dreadful; and we should say, *Woe to us, for we have sinned;* but if we contemplate it as humbling us, as rendering us sober, as producing good resolutions, as breeding circumspection and vigilance, as disposing us to submission to God's will, as occasioning the hope of mercy, the experience of divine goodness, a grateful sense of God's patience and mercy, it may yield satisfaction; and when we stand upon the shore we may view our wrack with some pleasure; we may hear with comfort those sacred aphorisms: *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

Lam. v. 16. Ps. xxxii. 1.

We may for that praise God, and no praise will be more cheerful than that: *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.*

Ps. xxxii. 5. Ps. ciii. 2, 3, 10.

God out of good and gracious intent doth permit sin to be, and suffereth even good men to fall; that his grace may

Digitized by Google

SERM. XXXIX.

abound[a], and his mercy may be glorified in restoring them. And from that wherein God's wisdom is seen, whereby his goodness triumpheth, whereby glory doth accrue to him, we may receive satisfaction.

If we reflect on our sins, with an obstinate resolution to persist in them, and to continue in enmity with God, without humble supplication for peace and pardon, without hope of mercy; then, indeed, we can have no true comfort; but this is a rejecting of joy, this is a flat defiance to the precept of rejoicing always.

Let us consider, that the most steady pleasure, or satisfaction of mind, is that which ariseth from a temperament of sadness and comfort; for those brisk and airy pleasures which are not alloyed with pensive considerations, want a body, are flashy, soon become flaccid, vapid, and decay into putrid stench and sourness; but the joy which is incorporated with sober sadness hath a solid fixation, and is not easily corrupted or dissipated; that sober calmness of mind, which ariseth from serious weighing and poising the reasons which incline both to joy and grief, is durable; and, as it is not so luscious as mere pleasure, so it is more savoury; the mind satisfying itself in the wisdom and wholesomeness of it.

Eccles. vii. 2, 3, 4.

The Preacher telleth us, that, *It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting;* that, *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth;* that, *Sorrow is better than laughter;* but why doth he say this; he that so often advis-

Eccles. viii. 15; iii. 12; ii. 24; iii. 22; v. 18.

eth men to rejoice, who affirmeth that, *There is nothing under the sun better than to be merry;* who calleth joy a good gift of God?

His reason is, because from a serious consideration of doleful objects the soul is disposed into a better frame, and

Eccles. vii. 3.

rendered more capable of true content, of solid joy; *For*, saith he, *by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.* And surely the sadness which bettereth the heart is a comfortable sadness; at least in consequence; pleasant fruits

[a] Οὗ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις.—Rom. v. 20.

Digitized by Google

growing from that bitter root; whereas vain mirth discomposeth the mind, is soon turned into gall; and *The end of that mirth is heaviness.* SERM. XXXIX. Job xx. 14.

He that will comply with this precept, must in order and preparation thereto do thus. Prov. xiv. 13.

1 He must labour to purify his heart, and watch over his ways; that his conscience be not defiled with sin. For no true joy is consistent with a conscience very foul.

2 He particularly must abstain from presumptuous sins, which do waste the conscience. Ps. xix. 13.

He that lifteth up his hand in wilful rebellion against God, shall be sure to find discomfort.

3 He must void habits of vice, which are chronical diseases of the soul, accompanied with continual pain; which put a man in a state of enmity with God, and consequently destitute of peace. Isai. xlviii. 22; lvii. 21.

No man can have any true, steady joy, who is not at peace with God.

4 He must be watchful over all his actions and conversation, that he does not offend.

So far as any man is negligent, or slothful in respect of his duty, so far he will find sorrow.

If a man indulge himself in any bad thing, he shall find dissatisfaction.

To conclude, there is but one thing in the world for which we have good reason heartily to grieve, that is, sin; but this grief we should avoid, by removing the cause of it; but if we sin we have a comfort, that we have an Advocate with the Father; we should rejoice in our repentance, we should rejoice in God's mercy, &c.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XL.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE.

PROV. IV. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence.

SERM. XL.

BEFORE we do apply ourselves to inculcate this precept, it is requisite that we should somewhat explain the terms, and settle the meaning thereof; in doing that, we begin with the last words, which qualify the action enjoined as to its degree or extent; *With all diligence:* the words answering to these in the Hebrew (מִכָּל־מִשְׁמָר) do, according to the various use or force of the particle מִן, admit a threefold acception. They may (1) denote absolutely the intenseness in degree, or extension in kind, of the performance required in this precept: Πάσῃ φυλακῇ τήρει σὴν καρδίαν, *Omni custodia serva cor tuum; Keep thy heart with all custody;* that is, with all sorts or with all degrees of care and diligence; so the LXX. interpreters, and the vulgar Latin following them, render those words. They may, (2) taking the particle for a *Mem excellentiæ,* as they call it, signify comparatively; *Præ omni custodia serva cor tuum; Keep thy heart above all keeping;* that is, especially and more than thou keepest any other thing; so doth Pagnin understand them; not without cause, both for the reason subjoined here, *Because from it are the issues of life;*

Digitized by Google

that is, because it is the principal part and fountain of all vital operations, and therefore deserveth the best custody; as also for that in what follows, and in other places of scripture frequently, we are enjoined to keep our tongues from bad discourse, our eyes from wandering after bad objects, our feet from declining to bad courses; and therefore probably in comparison to these, although needful and inferior custodies, we are admonished to this most especially incumbent custody of our hearts. They may also, (3) and that probably enough, be taken so as to denote the universality of the object, or matter of this keeping, or the adequate term and bound thereof; *Keep thy heart,* ἀπὸ παντὸς φυλάγματος, *ab omni re custodienda, from every thing which it should be kept from;* that is, from every thing offensive or hurtful to it: so did Aquila and Theodotion translate the words. These senses are all of them good, and each may fairly pretend to find place in the meaning of the words; which of them with most likelihood I shall not discuss, meaning only to insist upon the substance of the precept; the nature of which being duly considered, will infer, that it is to be observed according to the manner and measure prescribed, understood according to any of those senses, or according to all of them conjointly.

As for the meaning of the words, *Keep thy heart,* two enquiries may be made: I. What the heart is, which Solomon adviseth us to keep: II. What to keep it doth import.

I. To the first I answer, that, in the style of scripture, the heart doth commonly import the whole inward man, Ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, *The man within* Rom. vii. 22.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

us, as St Paul speaketh; Ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος, *The hidden man of the heart*, as St Peter calleth it, comprehending all the thoughts and imaginations, all the inclinations and dispositions, all the judgments and opinions, all the passions and affections, all the resolutions and purposes formed within us; in short, all interior, whether tendencies to move, or actual motions of human soul. For the scriptrure (by the way we may observe it) seemeth to favour that anciently most common and current opinion, (embraced by Aristotle himself, even as true in strict philosophy, although rejected by most of the latter schools,) that the heart, that material part and principal entrail of our body, is the chief seat of the soul, and immediate instrument of its noblest operations. However, because the heart in a man's breast is most inwardly seated, most secluded from sight, guarded from access, fenced from danger, thence whatever is inmost, most invisible, most inaccessible in any thing, is called the heart thereof; and all a man's secret thoughts, inclinations, opinions, affections, designs, are involved in this name; sometimes all, or divers of them conjunctly, are called his heart; sometimes any one of them singly (as there is subject or occasion of using the word) is so termed: instances in every kind are innumerably many, and very obvious; and therefore I shall not spend time in producing any; but shall suppose, that here the word may be understood in its utmost extent, so as to comprehend all the particulars intimated: there being no apparent reason for preferring or excluding any; all of them being capable of moral quality, both simply and immediately in themselves, and

1 Pet. iii. 4.

Digitized by Google

consequentially as they may be the principles of good or bad actions; and because all of them may be, need to be, ought to be, the objects of the keeping here enjoined. SERM. XL.

II. But then what is this keeping? I answer, that the word, as applied to this matter, is especially capable of three senses, each of which may be exemplified.

1 It may imply to observe, that is, to keep it under a constant view, as it were; to mark or attend unto, to inquire into and study our heart. So, *My son*, saith the Wise Man, *give me thy heart, and let thine eyes keep* (or *observe*) *my ways:* the same word which here, is there used, both in the Hebrew and Greek, and can there well signify no other custody but that of attending unto; it being the office of the eye only to look and observe. Likewise, *Observe*, saith God in the Law, *and hear all these words which I command thee;* that is, hear them very attentively: and so in divers other places. Prov. xxiii. 26. Deut. xii. 28.

2 It may also denote the governance or good management of our hearts, keeping all the motions thereof in due order, within fit compass, applying them to good, and restraining them from bad things: so the Psalmist useth the word, when he saith, *I will keep my mouth with a bridle;* that is, I will so rule and curb it, that no evil language shall issue from it: so when the Wise Man adviseth to keep our foot when we go to the house of God; by keeping it, he means rightly to guide and order our proceedings, or well to dispose ourselves, when we address ourselves to religious performances: so again, *He*, saith he, *that keepeth the* Ps. xxxix. 1. Eccles. v. 1. Prov. xxvii. 18.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof; he that keepeth it, that is, he that dresseth and ordereth it to advantage for bearing fruit.

3 Again, keeping may be taken for preserving, guarding, securing from mischief or damage; which, indeed, is the most common use of the word, and therefore we need no instancing to countenance it.

Now any of these senses may be intended here, or all of them together; and they, indeed, are in the nature of the thing so coherent, or so mutually dependent one on the other, that any one of them can hardly be practised without the rest: for without heedfully observing our heart, we cannot well govern it; and an ill governed heart cannot easily be attended to; and without both watchful observation and skilful management of it, we cannot guard it from evil; and reciprocally, without guarding it, we cannot well rule it, or duly mind it: such a complication there is in practice of these three custodies.

I shall at present only discourse concerning the first of them, which seems in the nature of things, and according to our method of acting, to precede. According to this exposition, when it is said, *Keep thy heart with all diligence,* we may understand it, as if each of us were thus advised: With a most constant and wary care observe all the interior propensions and motions of thy soul; whatever is done or designed within thee, whither thy desires lean, what thy affections are stirred by, to what thy judgment of things doth lead thee; with greatest attention and assiduity mark and ponder it.

It is a peculiar excellency of human nature, which seemeth more to distinguish a man from any inferior rank of creatures than bare reason

Digitized by Google

itself, that he can reflect upon all that is done within him, can discern the tendencies of his soul, is acquainted with his own purposes. Some shadows of other rational operations are discoverable in beasts; and it is not easy to convince them, who, from plausible experiments, do affirm them sometimes to syllogize: but no good reason or experience can, I suppose, make it probable, that they partake of this reflexive faculty; that they do ever regard or remark upon their own imaginations; they seem always to march directly forward with a blind impetuousness toward some pleasing object, without attending to the fancy that guides them, or the appetite which excites them: neither indeed do they seem to need any such power in order to the preservation of their life, or gratifying of their sense, which are the main ends they were designed and fitted for. But man being designed by his Maker, disposed by the frame of his nature, and obliged by a law imposed on him, not to follow casual impulses from exterior objects, nor the bare conduct of his imagination, nor the sway of his natural propensities; but to regulate as well the internal workings of his soul, as his external actions, according to certain laws or rules prescribed him, to settle his thoughts upon due objects, to bend his inclinations into a right frame, to constrain his affections within due bounds, to rectify his judgments of things, to ground his purposes upon honest reasons, and direct them unto lawful matters: it is needful that he should have this power of discerning whatever moveth or passeth within him, what he thinks upon, whither he inclines, how he judgeth, whence he is affected,

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

wherefore he doth resolve; without this power he could not be a moral agent, not able to perform any duty, not properly subject to any law, not liable to render an account of his doings: did he not perceive his own thoughts, how could he dispel them, when they are bad or vain? might he not observe his own inclinations, how could he strive to restrain them or to reform them, when they draw to unlawful practices? were he not sensible of his affections, how could he endeavour to reduce or compose them, when they become exorbitant or tumultuous? were he not conscious of his own opinions, how could he weigh and examine them? how could he conform his actions to them, or practise according to the dictates of his conscience? It is therefore plainly needful that man should be endued with this power, for that without it he can neither perform the duty required of him, nor enjoy the benefits he is capacified and designed for: our Maker therefore hath conferred it upon us, our duty consists in its right use, our advantage ariseth from the constant and careful exercise of this excellent faculty: constant and careful, I say: constant, for observation implies so much; for, if ever we shut our eyes or turn our heads aside, what we look to may be gone; much therefore will pass away undiscerned and unobserved by us, especially such quick and fleeting things as are the interior motions of our soul will escape; wherefore a continual vigilancy is requisite to a keeper of the heart: it must also be careful; as the keeper of a thing so nimble and slippery must not sleep, so he must not slumber; he must not be oscitant, but very intent upon his charge; superficial glances

Digitized by Google

upon the outward face, as it were, of the soul, will not suffice: to observe, is with earnest care to look through the matter, to discern whatever lurketh therein, to pierce into the very depth and bottom of it, to spy through every nook and corner therein; otherwise it is but slightly viewed rather than truly observed: especially so subtle, so intricate, so obscure a thing as a man's heart is, requireth an extraordinary application of mind in observing it with judgment and fruit.

This is then our duty, recommended by the Wise Man: to be continually, with extreme diligence, looking inward upon ourselves, observing what thoughts spring up within us; what imaginations find most welcome harbour in our breasts; what objects most affect us with delight or displeasure; (what it is that we love and readily embrace; what we distaste and presently reject;) what prejudices do possess our minds; wherefore we propose to ourselves such undertakings; conversing with ourselves, and, as it were, discoursing in this manner: What is it that I think upon? are my thoughts serious, seasonable, and pure? Whither do I propend? are my inclinations compliant to God's law and good reason? What judgments do I make of things? are my apprehensions clear, solid, sure, built upon no corrupt prejudice? What doth most easily stir me, and how is my heart moved? are my affections calm, and orderly, and well placed? What plots do I contrive, what projects am I driving on? are my designs good, are my intentions upright and sincere? Let me thoroughly inquire into these points, let me be fully satisfied in them: thus should we continually be

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

doing. The holy scripture doth often bid us to judge ourselves; to examine our works; to search and try; to weigh, to heed, to watch over our ways: *If,* saith St Paul, *we would judge* (*discern,* or *distinguish*[a]) *ourselves, we should not be judged;* that is, we should avoid those miscarriages which bring the divine judgments upon us: and, *Let us,* saith the prophet Jeremy, *search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord;* and, *I said, I will take heed to my ways,* saith the Psalmist; and, *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established,* is the Wise Man's advice. Search our ways, and ponder our paths; this implies, that we first do examine and weigh our hearts, for there our ways begin, thence is motion derived to our feet; and to our hands also: all our actions depend as effects of them, all do receive their moral quality thence: whatever in our doings is good or bad, Ἔσωθεν ἐκπορεύεται, *Doth,* as our Lord expresses it, *issue from within us;* our actions are but streams, sweet or bitter, clear or foul, according to the tincture they receive at those inward sources of good or evil inclinations, of true or false judgments, of pure or corrupt intention: there consequently we are principally obliged to exercise the scrutiny and trial required of us.

1 Cor. xi. 31. Gal. vi. 4. Lam. iii. 40. Ps. xxxix. 1. Prov. iv. 26. Mark vii. 23.

Socrates is reported[b] to have much admired that verse in Homer,

Ὅ, τῑ τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸν τ' ἀγαθόν τε τέτυκται[c],

affirming, that in it the sum of all wisdom is

[a] Εἰ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν.—1 Cor. xi. 31.

[b] Aul. Gell. XIV. 6. [—Quem (versum Homeri) Socrates præ omnibus semper rebus sibi esse cordi dicebat.]

[c] [Od. IV. 392.]

Digitized by Google

comprised; the sense and drift thereof being this, as he took it: Seek and study what good or bad is at home, within thy house; see how all goes in thy breast; employ thy chief inquiry upon the affairs of thy soul; there confining thy curiosity and care.

Such is the duty; and the practice thereof is of huge profit and use, bringing many great benefits and advantages with it; the neglect of it is attended with many grievous inconveniences and mischiefs: and for persuading to the one, dissuading from the other, I shall propound some of them, such as are most obvious, and offer themselves to my meditation.

The most general and most immediate advantage arising hence is this, that, by such a constant and careful inspection, or study upon our hearts, we may arrive to a competent knowledge of, and a true acquaintance with ourselves, (a most useful knowledge, a most beneficial acquaintance,) neither of them being otherwise attainable. *The heart,* as you know the Prophet says, *is deceitful above all things;* and *who,* adds he, *can know it?* Who can know it? None, it seems, but God that made it, and the man that hath it: he that hath it must, I say, be able competently to know it: even in regard to him the question may intimate some difficulty, but it doth not denote an absolute impossibility. Hard it may be for us to know the heart, by reason of its deceitfulness; but the sliest imposture, if narrowly looked into, may be detected: it is a very subtle and abstruse, a very various and mutable thing; the multiplicity of objects it doth converse with, the divers alterations it is subject to from bodily temper, custom, company, example,

Jer. xvii. 9.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

other unaccountable causes; especially its proneness to comply with, and to suit its judgments of things unto present circumstances without, and present appetites within, do render it such; wherefore it is not, indeed, easy to know it; but yet possible it is; for under severe penalties we are obliged not to be deceived by it, or, which is all one, not to suffer it to be deceived: *Let no man,* saith St Paul, *deceive himself: See that ye be not deceived,* saith our Saviour: *Take heed,* saith Moses, *to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived.* Such precepts there are many, obliging us to know our hearts, and to discover the fallacies put on them, or upon us by them; carrying with them directions how to compass it; that is, by looking about us, and taking heed, by careful circumspection and caution. It is therefore a feasible thing to avoid being imposed upon, and well to understand ourselves: but as other abstruse pieces of knowledge, so this especially cannot be attained without industrious applications of our mind, and constant observations, to find the corners wherein the deceit lurks; we must pursue its secret windings and intrigues; we must trace it step by step, as hunters do wild beasts, into the utmost recesses of its first desires and most deeply radicated prejudices; we must do as David did, when he strove to free himself from distrust and impatience in his straits: *I communed with my own heart,* saith he, *and my spirit made diligent search:* by which practice he found, as he further acquaints us, that it was his infirmity, which moved him to doubt of God's mercy and benignity toward him. Cicero, having somewhere commended philosophy as the most excellent gift by Heaven

1 Cor. iii. 18. Luke xxi. 8. Deut. xi. 16.

Ps. lxxvii. 6, 10.

Digitized by Google

bestowed upon man, assigns this reason: *Because it teaches us, as all other things, so especially this of all most difficult thing, to know ourselves*[d]. But he, with his favour, doth seem to promise for his friend more than she is able to perform; the main part of this knowledge doth lie beyond the reach of any particular method; the empiric seems to have more to do here than the doctor. Philosophy may perhaps afford us some plausible notions concerning the nature of our soul, its state, its power, its manners of acting; it may prescribe some wide directions about proceeding in the discovery of ourselves; but the particular knowledge (and therein the chief difficulty lieth) of ourselves, how our souls stand inclined and disposed, that only our particular earnest study and assiduous observation can yield unto us; and it is an inestimable advantage to obtain it. All men are very curious and inquisitive after knowledge; the being endued therewith passeth for a goodly ornament, a rich possession, a matter of great satisfaction, and much use: men are commonly ashamed of nothing so much as ignorance; but if any knowledge meriteth esteem for its worth and usefulness, this, next to that concerning Almighty God, may surely best pretend thereto; if any ignorance deserveth blame, this certainly is most liable thereto: to be studious in contemplating natural effects, and the causes whence they proceed; to be versed in the writings and stories of other men's doings; to be pragmatical observers of what is said or done without us, (that

[d] Hæc enim una nos cum cæteras res omnes, tum, quod est difficillimum, docuit, ut nosmet ipsos noscceremus.—Cic. de Leg. 1. [22, 58.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

which perchance may little concern, little profit us to know,) and in the mean while to be strangers at home, to overlook what passeth in our own breasts, to be ignorant of our most near and proper concernments, is a folly, if any, to be derided, or rather greatly to be pitied, as the source of many great inconveniences to us. For it is from ignorance of ourselves that we mistake ourselves for other persons than we really are; and accordingly we behave ourselves toward ourselves with great indecency and injustice; we assume and attribute to ourselves that which doth not anywise belong unto us, or become us: as put case, we are ignorant of the persons we converse with, as to their quality, their merit, their humour; we shall be apt to miscall and mistake them; to misbehave ourselves in our demeanour toward them; to yield them more or less respect than befits them; to cross them rudely, or unhandsomely to humour them: in like manner, if we be strangers to our hearts, shall we carry ourselves toward our own selves; we shall hence, like men in a phrensy, take ourselves for extraordinary people, rich, and noble, and mighty, when indeed, our condition being duly estimated, we are wretchedly mean and beggarly. We do frequently hug ourselves, (or rather shadows in our room,) admiring ourselves for qualities not really being in us; applauding ourselves for actions nothing worth, such as proceed from ill principles, and aim at bad ends; whenas, did we introvert our thoughts, and regard what we find in our hearts, by what inclinations we are moved, upon what grounds we proceed, we should be ashamed, and see cause rather to bemoan than to bless

Rev. iii. 17.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

ourselves: descending into ourselves[e], we might perchance discern, that most of our gallant performances (such as, not considering our hearts, we presume them to be) are derived from self-love or pride; from desire of honour, or love of gain; from fear of damage or discredit in the world, rather than out of love, reverence, and gratitude toward God, of charity, compassion, and good-will toward our brethren, of sober regard to our own true welfare and happiness; which are the only commendable principles and grounds of action. St Luke telleth us of certain men, *Who persuaded themselves that they were righteous, and despised others;* upon occasion of whom our Saviour dictated the parable of the Pharisee and Publican. Whence, think we, came that fond confidence in themselves, and proud contempt of others? From ignorance surely of themselves, or from not observing those bad dispositions, those wrong opinions, those corrupt fountains within, from whence their supposed righteous deeds did flow[f]. *If any man,* saith St Paul, giving an account of such presumptions, *thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing,* ἑαυτὸν φρεναπατᾷ, *he cheats himself in his mind; but let every man examine his work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone,* εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον, (or *privately with himself;*) some, he implieth, do impose upon and delude themselves, imagining themselves somebodies; (endued forsooth with admirable qualities, or to have achieved very

Luke xviii. 9.

Gal. vi. 3, 4.

[e] Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere; nemo.—
[Pers. Sat. IV. 23.]

[f] Ῥᾷστον ἑαυτὸν ἀπατᾶν, καὶ οἴεσθαι εἶναί τι, οὐδὲν ὄντα, ὑπὸ τῆς κενῆς δόξης φυσώμενον.—Greg. Naz. [Orat. XXXVI. Opp. Tom. I. p. 635 A.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

worthy deeds;) whenas, if they would inquire into themselves, they should find no such matter; that themselves were no such men, and their works no such wonders: but if, saith he, a man doth, δοκιμάζειν ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἔργον, explore and examine what he doeth, and in result thereof doth clearly perceive, that he acteth upon good reasons, and with honest intentions, then may he, indeed, enjoy a solid interior satisfaction, (a true καύχημα, or exultation of mind,) whatever others, not acquainted with those inward springs of his motion, do please to judge of him and his proceedings. No man, indeed, can truly value himself, or well approve of his own doings, so as to find any perfect comfort in himself, or in them, who doth not by studying himself discover whence and why he acts: one may be a flatterer, but cannot be a true friend to himself, who doth not thoroughly acquaint himself with his own inward state, who doth not frequently consult and converse with himself: a friend to himself, I said; and to be so is one of the greatest benefits that human life can enjoy; that which will most sweeten and solace our life to us: friendship with others (with persons honest and intelligent) is a great accommodation, helping much to allay the troubles, and ease the burdens of life; but friendship with ourselves is much more necessary to our wellbeing; for we have continual opportunities and obligations to converse with ourselves; we do ever need assistance, advice, and comfort at home[s]: and as

[s] Quis exul
Se quoque fugit?—
[Hor. Carm. II. 16. 20.]

Αὐτὸς σεαυτῷ χρῷ συμβούλῳ, καὶ τῷ Θεῷ.—Greg. Naz. [Ep. XXXIII. Opp. Tom. II. p. 30 C.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

commonly it is long acquaintance and familiar intercourse together, which doth conciliate one man to another, begetting mutual dearness and confidence, so it is toward one's self: as no man can be a friend to a mere stranger, or to one whose temper, whose humour, whose designs he is ignorant of; so cannot he be a friend to himself, if he be unacquainted with his own disposition and meaning[h]; he cannot in such a case rely upon his own advice or aid when need is, but will suspect and distrust himself; he cannot be pleasant company to himself, but shall be ready to cross and fall out with himself; he cannot administer consolation to his own griefs and distresses; his privacy will become a desertion, his retirement a mere solitude. But passing over this general advantage, I shall with some more minuteness of distinction consider divers particular advantages accruing from the practice of this duty, together with the opposite inconveniences, which are consequent upon the neglect thereof.

1 The constant and careful observation of our hearts will serve to prevent immoderate self-love and self-conceit; to render us sober and modest in our opinions concerning, and in our affections toward ourselves; qualifying us to comply with the apostolical precept, Μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν, that is, not to overween, or overvalue ourselves, and our own things: for he that, by serious inspection upon his own heart, shall discern how Rom. xii. 3.

[h] Ἀλλ' ἔνιοι, τὸν ἴδιον βίον, ὡς ἀτερπέστατον θέαμα, προσιδεῖν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, οὐδ' ἀνακλᾶσαι τὸν λογισμόν, ὡς φῶς ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς καὶ περιαγαγεῖν· ἀλλ' ἡ ψυχὴ γέμουσα κακῶν παντοδαπῶν, καὶ φρίττουσα καὶ φοβουμένη τὰ ἔνδον, ἐκπηδᾷ θύραζε, &c.—Plut. de Curios. Opp. Tom. II. p. 916. Ed. Steph.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

many fond, impure, and ugly thoughts do swarm within him; how averse his inclinations are from good, and how prone to evil; how much his affections are misplaced and distempered, (while he vehemently delights in the possession, and impotently frets for the want of trifles, having small content in the fruition, and but slender displeasure for the absence of the greatest goods; while empty hopes exalt him, and idle fears deject him; while other various passions, like so many tempests, drive and toss him all about;) who shall observe, how clouds of darkness, error, and doubt do hover upon the face of his soul; so that he quickly taketh up opinions, and soon layeth them down, and often turneth from one mistake unto another; how unsettled his resolutions are, especially in the pursuance of the best goods, and what corrupt mixtures cleave to his best purposes; who taketh notice how backward he is unto, and how cold in, devotions toward God; how little sensible of his goodness, or fearful of his displeasure, or zealous for his honour, or careful of performing his duty toward him; how little also it is that he desireth or delighteth in the good, that he pitieth and grieveth at the evil of his neighbour; how sluggish also and remiss he is in the pursuance of his own best affairs and highest concernments; he that doth, I say, frequently with heedfulness regard these imperfections and obliquities in his own heart, how can he be ravished with self-love? How can he be much taken with himself? Can any man dote upon such deformity, admire such weakness and naughtiness? No surely: that men are so amorous of themselves, so haughty and arrogant in their conceits, doth constantly

Digitized by Google

arise from not reflecting on their own hearts; not beholding themselves wistly enough in that mirror; not considering, according to just representation there, how little lovely or worthy they are: if they did practise that, they would see reason, and thence become inclinable, rather to despise, to loathe, to pity themselves.

2 Upon that advantage is consequent, that this practice will dispose us with equanimity and patience to bear all crosses and grievances befalling us[1]; so producing not only an excellent virtue, but a considerable solace to us; for the being conscious of so much unworthiness, which observation of our heart will necessarily discover, will not only justify the providence, (so removing all just cause of complaint,) but will commend the benignity of God unto us, (so administering good matter of thanks.) It will prompt us heartily to confess with those in Ezra, that our punishments are less than our deservings; to join in acknowledgment with the Psalmist, that, *God hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;* to say with Jeremy, *It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not;* with Jacob, *I am less than any of thy mercies.*

Ezra ix. 13. Ps. ciii. 10. Lam. iii. 22. Gen. xxxii. 10.

3 Particularly, this practice will fence us against immoderate displeasure occasionable by men's hard opinions, or harsh censures passed on us: for he, that by inquiry into himself perceives so many defects in himself, will not so easily nor so greatly be offended, if some of them (or some like to them)

[1] Leniter, ex merito quidquid patiare, ferendum est.— Ovid. Her. Ep. v. [7.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

be objected to him; since he finds himself truly liable to many more, and greater. Epictetus's[k] advice is, when you are told that any man speaks ill of you, that you should not apologize, but answer only, that he was ignorant of many other faults of yours, or he would not only have mentioned those. To be disposed, without dissembling, or affectation, to follow his counsel, would argue a man very intelligent of himself, and well prepared to endure happily and handsomely encounters of this kind, which every man shall be sure to meet with. None indeed can so contentedly brook reproach, or blame, as he that, by intimate acquaintance with his own heart, doth know the censure passed on him to be in effect mild and favourable; as finding himself a witness of more faults, than any adversary can accuse him of; as being a stricter examiner and severer judge of himself, than the most envious eye or disaffected mind can be. It is also some comfort, that, if censures be very outrageous, a man by knowledge of himself (by knowing his own dispositions, if his person be disfigured by a very ill character; by knowing his own purposes, if his actions be grievously aspersed) is certain they are such; that he can be as well a faithful witness, and just judge for himself, as against himself.

4 Likewise this practice will defend us, as from the discomforts of harsh censure, so from the mistakes and miscarriages to which the more favourable opinions of men, or their flattering

[k] [*Ἐάν τίς σοι ἀπαγγείλῃ, ὅτι ὁ δεῖνά σε κακῶς λέγει, μὴ ἀπολογοῦ πρὸς τὰ λεχθέντα· ἀλλ' ἀποκρίνου, διότι, Ἠγνόει γὰρ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ προσόντα μοι κακά, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἂν ταῦτα μόνα ἔλεγεν.*—Enchir. cap. XXXIII. § 9.]

Digitized by Google

expressions, (those luscious poisons,) may expose us[1].

> **Nihil est, quod credere de se**
> **Non possit, quum laudatur[m].**

It is not only true of great men, but even of all men: the common nature of men disposeth them to be credulous when they are commended, or receive any signification of esteem from others: every ear is tickled with this ἡδιστον ἄκουσμα[n], this sweet music of applause: but we are not to rely upon others' imperfect and ill-grounded judgment, so much as upon our own more certain knowledge concerning ourselves:

> **Ne cui de te plus quam tibi credas[o].**

Take no man's word before thine own sense, in what concerns thine own case and character, is an advice deserving our regard and practice: for that a man in questions of this kind is able to be a skilful and indifferent umpire between himself and others; that he is neither elevated nor depressed in mind by external weights, but keepeth himself equally poised in a just consistence by his own well-informed conscience; that neither his heart is exasperated with the bitterest gall of reproach, nor his head intoxicated with the sweetest wine of flattery, is an invaluable convenience of life; or rather, it is a virtue arguing a most strong and healthful constitution of soul. *How great a levity of mind, how great a vanity is it,* saith a good Father, *setting*

[1] **Index ipse sui se totum explorat ad unguem,**
Quid proceres, vanique ferat quid opinio vulgi,
Securus.—[Auson. Idyll. xvi. 3.]

[m] [Juv. Sat. iv. 70.]

[n] [Xen. Mem. ii. 1. 31.]

[o] [Hor. Ep. i. 16, 19.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

aside a man's own conscience, to follow other men's opinion, (and even that feigned and forged,) to be snatched away by the wind of false praise, to rejoice in being circumvented, and to receive being mocked for a benefit[p]*!* From being thus abused, this practice alone can secure us: if we know ourselves well, we cannot so easily be deluded by the mistakes of others concerning us, on either hand.

5 Likewise, further upon the same score, this practice will conduce to qualify our opinions, and moderate our passions toward others; so that without intemperate anger, or bitterness, we may bear the faults, errors, and infirmities of our brethren; that we shall be benign in our carriage, and gentle in our censures even toward them who do not behave themselves so well and wisely as they should do.

Gal. vi. 1. St Paul thus admonisheth the Galatians: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual* (the more spiritual, whether in truth, or in our own esteem, the more especially are we obliged hereto) *restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou may be also tempted:* σκοπῶν σεαυτόν, *looking upon,* or *spying into thyself;* such considering ourselves, taking notice of our own infirmity within, perceiving how subject we are to the impressions of temptation, and that hence it may be our own case to fall and falter, if occasion concur with our weakness[q]; discerning this, I say, as it will be a reason obliging,

[p] Quæ hæc tanta levitas est animi, quæ tanta vanitas, relicta propria conscientia, alienam opinionem sequi; et quidem fictam atque simulatam; rapi vento falsæ laudationis, gaudere ad circumventionem suam, et illusionem pro beneficio accipere?—Hier. (vel Paulinus) ad Celant. [Ep. CIX. Opp. Tom. IV. p. ii. col. 816.]

[q] M. Ant. XI. § 18.

Digitized by Google

so it may be an instrument conducing to a mitigation of spirit toward those, whom we see overtaken with mistake, or overborne by frailty. *Why dost thou see a mote in thy brother's eye, but dost not consider the beam in thine own eye?* is our Saviour's question. Why a man should do so, there cannot, as he implies, any good reason be assigned; it is a very unreasonable and inexcusable miscarriage: but whence a man doeth so is obvious and plain; it is, because he curiously pries into other men's doings, and carelessly neglecteth the observation of his own heart. Did we reflect our sight inwards, we should be more apt to mark our own faults, and less ready to discover those of others; or, however, we should be more gently affected in regard to them: for he that knows himself a beggarly wretch, will he reproach poverty to another? he that consulting the glass doth find himself ill-favoured, will he upbraid another for want of grace or beauty? he that perceives that the dart will rebound, and thereby wound himself, will he not be careful of flinging it? will a man be forward in pronouncing a heavy sentence against another, who considers himself by plain consequence involved in the condemnation thereof? Should a man do so, he doth at least render himself uncapable of apology or excuse: so we are told by St Paul: *Every censurer* (*πᾶς ὁ κρίνων*) *is*, saith he, *inexcusable; for that in arraigning another he condemns himself:* guilty he is of inexcusable folly, or impudence; of folly and blindness, if he see not; of extreme impudence, if, seeing his own obnoxiousness, he will not abstain from judging others for that, of which himself is guilty in the same kind, or

Matt. vii. 3.

Rom. ii. 1.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

2 Sam. xii. 5.

equivalently in some other. You know how David was caught by Nathan, and unwarily adjudged himself to death: and so may every man expose himself, that is rigorous in censure toward others, without reflecting upon himself, and considering his own heart; wherein he shall find so much ground and matter of being angry with, and judging himself[r]. If we will be fierce and keen, it is reason we should be so first, and chiefly there, where our greatest enemies do abide, whence most mischief ariseth to us; where there is fittest matter, and justest cause of passion: thus is this practice a most proper and effectual remedy for those baneful vices of pride and peevishness in ourselves, of malignity and fury toward others. But further,

6 The observation of our heart yieldeth great advantage, in being very conducible to render men truly wise and prudent, in those things especially, which most nearly concern them; giving them to see before them, and to understand what they do, and to proceed with security; as contrarily the neglect thereof rendereth men unadvised and uncertain in their doings. A main point of prudence consisteth in suiting a man's undertakings to his powers and capacities; in not attempting things surpassing his ability or fitness; and in not declining such useful or beneficial attempts as he may well compass. Some are over bold and rash in setting upon things beyond their strength to accomplish, or skill to manage; whence commonly with

[r] Si volumus æqui omnium rerum judices esse, hoc primum nobis suadeamus, neminem nostrum esse sine culpa.—Sen. de Ir. [II. 27. 5.]

Συγγνώμην ἔφη δεῖν διδόναι πᾶσι τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι, πλὴν ἑαυτοῦ.—Cato Maj. Plut. Opp. Tom. v. p. 624. Ed. Steph.

Digitized by Google

shame and sorrow they are defeated in their enterprises; others are over backward and diffident, so as not to adventure upon what they may with good advantage, or perhaps ought to perform; thence depriving themselves of the benefits they might obtain, or omitting the duties which they are obliged to; both which inconveniences usually do proceed from the not looking into and studying the heart; for the most and greatest impediments of action do lie there; being grounded upon inward indispositions, or disagreeableness of men's temper, capacity, inclination to the matters, to which they apply themselves. A tender foot will be galled and lamed, if you set it going in rugged paths; a weak head will turn, if you place it high, or upon the brink of a precipice; a soft spirit cannot well comport with boisterous employment; he that naturally affects calm and quiet must not hope to come off well, if he engage himself upon affairs exposed to abundance of care and tumult; nor will he, if he be well studied this way, and rightly understand himself, adventure thereupon. It was as well according to wisdom as modesty that David could say, *My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.* In every undertaking two things occur to be considered: what of difficulty is found therein, and what of temptation; whether it can he done, and whether it should be done. It is a folly to spend our care and pains upon that which is too hard for us to effect; and it is worse than so to adventure upon that which most probably will bring us into sin, and hurt our souls; only the study of ourselves, weighing

Ps. cxxxi. 1.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

our power, and trying our temper, will prevent both: he that doeth this may commonly foresee what, the case being put, he shall do; that if such a temptation doth assault him in such circumstances, his inclinations will be apt to comply therewith, and he shall scarce be able lo resist; that, for instance, he shall wax haughty in a state of dignity, become luxurious in abundance of wealth, be distracted with care in a busy employment; and therefore he will not be so forward to engage himself upon such occasions, danger and mischief being so vividly prerepresented to his sight. But he that pondereth not his own heart is ready to presume, that, be the business what it will, he shall come off well; and so unadvisedly rusheth into the snare: he assumes unwieldy burdens upon his shoulders, which he soon feeleth sorely to oppress and pain him; which he can neither bear with ease, nor put off with convenience. When, for instance, the prophet told Hazael what cruelties and rapines should, when he got power and opportunity, be committed by him; you see how he was startled at the report: *Am I a dog?* saith he; that is, Can I be so vile and base? Yes, he might himself have perceived, that he should in likelihood be so; the probability of his doing as the Prophet said, had been no great news to him, if he had observed his own inclinations. Good Agur on the other side did better understand himself, when he prayed, *Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me.* He was conscious of natural infirmity, and therefore afraid of being in a condition that might prevail upon it; of great wealth, lest it should tempt him to forgetfulness

2 Kings viii. 13.

Prov. xxx. 8.

Digitized by Google

and neglect of God; (*Lest*, saith he, *I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?*) of extreme want, lest it should put him upon unjust, dishonest, and impious courses to maintain his life, (*Lest*, adds he, *I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*) He saw, by looking into himself, that self-love (the root of pride and injustice) was potent in him, and formidable, when occasion should favour it, and, therefore, by imploring divine aid, he strove to decline the advantages and occasions of it. It was good counsel which Xenophon tells us the oracle gave Crœsus, consulting about the success of his attempt against Cyrus, Σαυτὸν γιγνώσκων εὐδαίμων, Κροῖσε, περάσεις, *Knowing thyself, thou shalt pass on happily*[s], (in the course of thy life and undertakings.) Had he, considering his own ability, in relation to the dubious event of things, (that as he could not promise himself good fortune, so he did not know how he should comport with bad; being not sure that he should overcome either his enemies or himself)—thus, I say, had he complied with the oracle's advice, he might have escaped the loss and sorrow which befell him. So is it with us: if we know not the burden of our vessel, we shall either put more sail to it than it can bear, or less than will suffice to carry it on; it will be overladen, or want fit ballast. If we are ignorant of our capacities, we shall either soar too high with a dangerous confidence, or grovel below in a sluggish listlessness: studying ourselves will help to preserve us in a middle pitch, will direct us in a moderate course, wherein we may proceed with sufficient courage and alacrity;

SERM. XL.

Prov. xxx. 9.

[s] De Cyri Instit. VII. [2, 20.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

with a prudent foresight, or at least with a comfortable hope of good success.

7 Near to that lies another considerable benefit, attending this practice, which is, that it will help to render us expedite in our resolutions, and constant to them; consistent with ourselves, and uniform in our proceedings; whence will arise both great convenience to ourselves, and satisfaction to others with whom we deal or converse: as on the contrary side, from the neglect thereof, we shall become slow in deliberation, doubtful in resolution, and unstable in performance. When any occasion of acting is presented, we shall be ready to close with what is agreeable to our inclination, and not repugnant to our judgment, if, by due study and experience, we are acquainted with them: that acquaintance is a certain preparation to a speedy choice; and we shall upon the same grounds constantly adhere to our choice, standing upon so firm a base; and so shall neither discompose ourselves, nor disappoint others by our irresolution and inconstancy. But he that skills not his own heart, first will dwell long upon consultation, (not feeling perfectly whither his inward bias doth draw him;) and when he seems, upon some superficial reason, to have determined on one side, some discordance to his own inclination, or some latent prejudice soon discovering itself, he wavers, and at length falls off; finding that he hath promised to himself, or others, what he is unable or unwilling to perform; so, like St James's two-souled man, *He is unsteady in all his ways.* The hard student of himself is like a man that hath his estate *in numerato,* in ready cash, all in his hand, or at his command; he can

James i. 8.

Digitized by Google

presently tell what he can do, and satisfy those he hath to do with. Go to him, you may know where to have him, even just where you left him, or where he uses to be; you may expect a sudden despatch, and you may rely upon his word; for he knows beforehand what he doeth, and shall continue to like; why he determines so or so; and cannot be removed from his well-grounded purpose, (that which is by the philosopher[t] termed, *Ratio non dissidens, nec hæsitans, A reason that doth not strive, nor stick*, he is master of.) But he that neglects this practice, what he hath any title to, lieth dispersed, and laid up in corners unknown to himself, so that himself cannot comē readily by it; you can hardly tell where to find him; you must wait his resolution; and when it is told you, you cannot be assured thereof, nor anywise satisfied, that he will stick to his word, or his mind: he knows not thoroughly what he would have himself; can you then hope for a certain answer from him? He cannot well trust himself; can you then rely upon him? He will find himself mistaken and crossed in his own choice; can you expect less? *Quid est sapientia? semper idem velle, atque idem nolle*[u]*:* Constancy to a man's self is, saith he, the very being of wisdom: however, nothing more beseems a man, more commends him to society, and suits him to business, is more pleasant and grateful to those who have to do with him, than such a clear, uniform, steady disposition of mind; such a smooth and even tenor of action; nothing renders conversation and commerce more unpleasant, than a fickle

[t] Sen. de Vit. B. cap. VIII. [4.]
[u] Id. Ep. XX. [4.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

lubricity of humour, and unaccountable deformity of behaviour: that study therefore is very useful, which conduceth to breed and maintain the one, and which removeth the other.

8 Again, another valuable convenience of this practice is, that it disposeth unto and preserveth a man's mind in a sober temper, agreeable to his state, and to the circumstances into which he is cast; such a temper I mean as that which the Wise Man prescribes, where he saith, *In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity, consider.* It is apt to beget either a comfortable joy, or a wholesome regret, according as the interior condition of his soul (that wherein the chief cause of the one or of the other affection is grounded) doth seasonably and justly require. To be transported with mirth and jollity in a state of grievous misery, when reason itself demands sorrow and pity; to be sad and dumpish when all things flow prosperously; either of those will seem marvellously incongruous, and argue a kind of stupidity in him that so behaves himself. Now there is not in truth any calamity so disastrous, as that which befalls us within ourselves, no prosperity so worthily delightful as the good proceeding of affairs in our souls: it is the most excellent pleasure a man is capable of, that which doth spring from the being conscious, that his mind doth εὐοδοῦσθαι, as St John speaks, that is, go well forward in a happy course, that good thoughts freely do spring up, that good inclinations are strong and prevalent, that good habits of mind wax vigorous, that the love of goodness is improved, that he, generally, doth thrive in health

Eccles. vii. 14.

3 John i. 2.

Digitized by Google

and strength spiritual. No increase of treasure can affect the covetous, no rising in power and dignity can satisfy the ambitious, no enjoyment of sensual entertainments can ravish the voluptuous man with so true or great content, as the sensible proficiency in virtuous and pious dispositions of soul, growing richer unto God, and stronger in the hopes of his favour, do produce in him that doth affect it, and can perceive it: it is a joy in all respects incomparable; only wise and reasonable, pure and innocent, firm and durable. As, on the other hand, if it be so that we discern, that within our hearts bad thoughts do swarm and multiply, bad appetites do sway, bad customs do encroach upon us; that desire of and delight in good things decay; that we become more dark, dull, unsettled in our spiritual apprehensions, more feeble and languid in our prosecutions of virtue, it is a great benefit to have a timely remorse prompting and urging us to endeavour a deliverance from so unhappy a condition: but no man can well either enjoy that comfortable delight, or be affected with this profitable sorrow, who doth not with a careful attention view his heart, and descry how things go there. This consideration mindeth of a further and more general advantage accruing from this practice; which is this, that

SERM. XL.

Luke xii. 21.

9 A serious inspection into our hearts doth much avail toward the reformation of our hearts and lives; curing the distempers and correcting the vices of them. For to the curing any disease it is requisite to know the complexion and temper of the patient, and the part affected, and the next causes thereof. As the most grievous of bodily

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

diseases are seated in, or do proceed from, the entrails; but not all of them from the same one of them; and the same disease depends upon the distemper sometimes of one, sometimes of another among them: so do all vices (as our Saviour expressly teacheth) issue from the heart, or interior man; some from one, some from another part or region thereof; and the same from different parts: sometimes natural temper, sometimes false opinion, sometimes evil custom is the root of the same kind of disease; and it is expedient we should know distinctly which of them in particular cases is the root, that accordingly we may understand what method of cure to use, whence to fetch the remedy, where to apply it; for unskilfulness in these points may frustrate our endeavours of amendment. If the mischief proceed from natural inclination, we must not hope ever utterly to subdue it, nor to free ourselves suddenly from the incursions thereof; nor is bare reasoning a proper weapon against it, it being grounded in the original constitution of the soul, either immediately, or as linked to the body; which by no operation of our mind can be soon altered; for, *No wisdom,* as Seneca speaketh well, *can remove the natural vices of body or mind; what is infixed and inbred may be allayed by art, not subdued*[x]. Reason alone and directly is not able to grapple therewith; she will break her teeth upon so tough and knotty a matter: it will weary her arms in vain to swim against the rapid current of natural propension; the violent eruptions thereof

Matt. xv. 18.

[x] Nulla enim sapientia naturalia corporis aut animi vitia ponuntur: quicquid infixum et ingenitum est, lenitur arte, non vincitur. —Sen. Ep. XI. [2.]

Digitized by Google

may, indeed, somewhat be restrained; occasions of complying therewith may often be declined; it may in time, and by degrees, be weakened by subtracting the food and incentives thereof: but especially devils of this kind must, as our Saviour instructeth us, be ejected by humble, earnest, and frequent invocation of divine assistance; without which other means commonly will prove ineffectual. But if the vice proceed only from ill habit, or the prevalence of bad custom, we are to oppose a contrary custom thereto[y], presently disusing that practice, and acting otherwise, so shall we easily remove and extirpate it: if neither of these causes are discernible, we may presume our indisposition is derived from ill opinion; and that consequently our best course of redressing it, is to examine the reason of the thing; to get clear and right apprehensions concerning it. For example, if we observe ourselves apt to be frequently transported with anger, let us look into our hearts, and take notice whether the root of that distemper be a choleric complexion, or whether it arise from an habitual indulgence to ourselves of being moved upon slight causes, whereby a peevish humour is grown upon us; or whether it cometh from vain conceits of ourselves, as of persons unto whom extraordinary deference and observance is due, so that no man should presume to dissent from our opinion, or contravene our desire; and as we find, so we must respectively proceed in repressing the causes of this disease; praying, if it arise from nature, to the Omnipotent, (the only Lord and Commander of nature,) that he would by his grace free us from

[y] Τί φθείρει τὸ ἦθος; ἐναντίον ἦθος.—Epict. [Diss. I. 17.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

that inflammable temper, and enable us to govern our passion; withal shunning occasions of being provoked; abstaining from such diet, such business, such company, as naturally do kindle or ferment that humour: if the malady grow from custom, using ourselves to bear patiently harsh words, unkind dealings, cross accidents; if our opinion dispose us thereto, reasoning ourselves into moderate conceits about ourselves, considering the reasons that may acquit or excuse others to us upon occasion of offence: using all, or some of these means, or the like, such as the observation of our heart shall discover to us to be most proper and suitable to the nature, or to the cause of this distemper infesting us, we shall wholly, or in good part, rid ourselves from it. Again, (to adjoin another example, the matter seeming to deserve our heed,) suppose we experience ourselves inclining to covetousness, eager in getting, solicitous in keeping, unwilling to part with our goods upon reasonable occasion, (for the maintenance of our convenient respect in the world, or for relieving the needs of our brethren, or for serving the public, or for promoting the interests of piety and virtue;) let us then look, and see whether this ariseth from a natural straitness, hardness, suspiciousness, or diffidence of heart, (some such dispositions may be observed in men,) or from being, by our education, or manner of life, inured to such a love of getting, or of sparing, or of tenacity; or whether it springs from conceits about the worth or the necessity of wealth, (that, without being furnished with heaps of treasure, we shall come into danger of want or disgrace; we shall not be able to maintain our life,

Digitized by Google

or uphold our credit; we shall not enjoy any thing, or be any bodies among men;) let us, I say, by examining our hearts, find out from which of these springs this sordid disposition floweth, and accordingly strive to correct it; either praying to Almighty God, that he would enlarge and supple our heart, if it be natural to us; or addicting ourselves upon reasonable occasion to liberality and free expense, if custom hath therein prevailed upon us; or if vain surmises have seduced us, rectifying our judgments; as by other good discourses, proper against that brutish vice, so especially by considering, that God is most good and bountiful, and tender of our being overwhelmed with need; that he continually watcheth over us, so that he cannot but see, and will regard what we want; and that he faithfully hath promised, if we endeavour to please him, and use a moderate diligence in honest ways to maintain ourselves, that he will yield his blessing, and never will leave us destitute. So in all cases we may proceed discreetly in the cure of our spiritual distempers, and in withstanding the temptations to sin that assault us, if we do but search into our hearts, and learn thence, whence they flow, and by what they are nourished.

10 This practice, further, doth particularly serve to regulate our devotions, and performances more immediately spiritual; by shewing us what we need to pray for, what we are obliged to give thanks for, what it becomes us to confess and deprecate: for want thereof we shall be apt not only to neglect, but indecently to confound, yea miserably to pervert these duties; to confound them by praying for what is already given us, is

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

put into our hand, or lies within our reach; for which therefore we are not to pray, but to render thanks; also by giving thanks formally for that, which perhaps we are far from possessing, and do most want; so, I say, we shall be apt to confound and misplace, to render vain and chimerical in a sort our spiritual addresses, as wanting due ground and object; yea to pervert them by asking for things really prejudicial and hurtful to us, (in the circumstances we stand,) and thanking God for what in anger and judgment he dispenseth to us, (so, indeed, are many appearing goods, grateful to present sense,) as also deprecating things most beneficial and useful, and healthful to our souls; neglecting to return thanks for what God disposeth in mercy, (so are many things at present bitter and unsavoury to our carnal appetite and fancy;) thus from ignorance of ourselves, and what we truly need, are we apt to pervert our devotions, not only defeating ourselves of the advantages they might yield us, but (if God be not more gracious than to hearken to us, and to grant our wishes[z]) bringing lamentable mischief on ourselves. Many examples of these confusions and perverse misapplications of devotion both scripture affords, and experience will suggest, if we observe them. You know the comparison in the Gospel between the devotions of the Pharisee and the Publican, with the different acceptance they found: the one was prompt enough to give thanks for the graces he had received, and the advantages he conceived that he had in his qualities, and in his performances

Ps. lxxiii. 18.

Heb. xii. 11.

Luke xviii. 10—13.

[z] Evertere domos totas optantibus ipsis
Dii faciles, &c.— Juv. Sat. x. [7.]

Digitized by Google

above others; but not having duly studied himself, did not perceive, that he was rather bound to ask pardon for the pride of his heart, and the vanity that adhered to his performances, which rendered his thanksgiving very improper and unseasonable. The other being conscious of his demerits and wants, with a manner suitable to his condition, in words few, but full and fit, did confess his unworthiness, (which to do did best beseem him,) and implored mercy, (which was the thing he chiefly needed;) so was his discreet prayer better accepted, than the other's impertinent thanksgiving: *I tell you,* saith our Saviour, *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.* Luke xviii. 14.

The two sons of Zebedee, conceiting that our Lord would shortly become a great prince, and affecting to become favourites then, did confidently sue for the next place of dignity about him; our Lord repressed their fond ambition by downright telling them first, that they knew not what they asked: Matt. xx. 21, 22. then by demanding of them whether they were able to undergo the trials they should meet with; implying what they should rather have requested, that they more needed humility and patience, than pomp and pleasure: and it was the same two persons, whose intemperate zeal he otherwhere checked with an, Οὐκ οἴδατε οἵου πνεύματος, *Ye know not of what spirit ye are:* and no wonder, if they, who knew not what they were, did ask they knew not what; that, being ignorant of their own hearts, they should endite absurd petitions; that in such a case they should desire things not only incongruous and inconvenient, but dangerous and destructive to themselves. For to make a right distinction of Luke ix. 55.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

these duties; to be able discreetly and pertinently, if I may so speak, to converse with God, it is requisite to look into our hearts, and from them to take fit matter, due measure, right season of request, and of acknowledgment respectively; things commonly not being as they appear to our present sense, or to our gross conceit, in themselves, or in their degree, good or bad; but according to the disposition of our hearts, and the effects they work upon them. That is not good which pleaseth our sense and fancy; nor that bad which disgusts them; but that is good, which rendereth our heart wiser and better, which correcteth our inclinations, composeth our affections, informeth our judgments rightly, and purifieth our intentions; that is bad, which hath contrary effects within us. We, it is likely, should pray with greatest seriousness and earnestness for the removal of those infirmities, for ease from those afflictions; which we see the holy Apostles (being better instructed in things, being more acquainted with themselves) did rejoice, did glory in, did give thanks for; as finding the wholesome operation they had upon their hearts; that by them their virtues were exercised and improved, their faith tried, their patience increased, their hope confirmed; that, to use the Apostle's words, *They did in the sequel return the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who were exercised by them:* but leaving this point, though deserving perhaps further consideration, I proceed, and say further, that

James i. 2. Rom. v. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Gal. vi. 14. 1 Pet. i. 6.

Heb. xii. 11.

11 The continual visitation of our inward parts doth not only yield much advantage, (as in some measure hath been shewed,) at the long run, by influence at the spring-head upon the principles and

Digitized by Google

causes of action, but doth immediately conduce to good practice, preventing and stifling in the very birth many sinful and vain practices: that so many indiscreet and impertinent, so many irregular and unsavoury, so many unjust and uncharitable speeches do issue from our mouths, it is especially because we are not then employed upon this duty; are not watching over our hearts, and observing those inward fountains, (levity and wantonness of thought, precipitancy and disorder of passion) from whence they overflow: were we intent there we should perhaps endeavour to stop the current, and contain these inward bad motions from venting themselves. The like we may say concerning many unwarrantable actions, into which we inconsiderately plunge ourselves, not heeding whence they spring: did we regard, that such actions were arising from ambitious, covetous, froward dispositions, or from certain ill-grounded prejudices lurking in our minds, we should often surely forbear them: but while we keep none, or bad sentinels; while in the custody of our hearts we sleep, or are drowsy; while we neglect to examine and weigh our actions what they are, and whence they come, they (although very bad and hurtful) do steal by us, and pass as friends, and we hear no more of them, but in their woful consequences. What efficacy the consideration of God's omnipresent eye, beholding all our doings, hath, and how all wise men do press it as a powerful means to contain us from bad action, you cannot but well know; as, likewise, that some of them, in order to the same purpose, direct us to conceive ourselves always under the inspection of some person especially venerable for his worth, or

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

for his relation to us, whom we should be afraid or ashamed to displease[a]: and surely were the faith concerning God's presence, or the fancy concerning the presence of a Cato, or a Lælius, strong enough, they could not but have great effect: however, did we but live, even in our own presence, under the eye of our own judgment and conscience; regarding not only the matter and body, but the reason and ground, that is the soul, of our actings; even that would do much; the love and reverence of ourselves would somewhat check and control us; we should fear to offend, we should be ashamed to vilify even ourselves by fond or foul proceedings; it would, in the philosopher's esteem, supply the room of any other keeper or monitor, if we could thus keep ourselves; *If*, saith he, *we have so far profited, as to have got a reverence of ourselves, we may then well let go a tutor, or pedagogue*[b].

12 This practice doth much conduce to the knowledge of human nature and the general dispositions of mankind, which is an excellent and most useful part of wisdom: for the principal inclinations and first motions of the soul are like in all men; whence he that by diligent study of himself hath observed them in his own soul, may thence collect them to be in others; he hath at least a great advantage of easily tracing them, of soon descrying them, of clearly perceiving them in those he converseth with; the which knowledge is of great use, as directing us how to accommodate ourselves in our behaviour and dealing with others.

[a] Vid. Sen. Epp. XI. [6.] XXV. [5.]

[b] Quum jam profeceris tantum, ut sit tibi etiam tui reverentia, licebit dimittas pædagogum.—Id. Ep. XXV. [5.]

Digitized by Google

No man, indeed, can be a good instructor or adviser in moral affairs, who hath not attained this skill, and doth not well understand the nature of man: his precepts and rules will certainly be fallacious, or misapplied without it: this is that which rendered the dictates of the Stoics and other such philosophers so extravagant and unpracticable, because they framed them not according to the real nature of man, such as is existent in the world, but according to an idea formed in their own imaginations.

Some caution, indeed, is in this matter to be used, that those motions of soul, which proceed from particular temper and complexion, from supervenient principles or habits, may be distinguished from those which are natural and common unto all: which distinction to make is of great use and benefit, in order to the governing, restraining, or correcting them.

If there be any in us, which are not observable in any other men; or in other men, which are not in us, those do not arise from common nature, but from the particular disposition of one or other respectively.

13 I add lastly, that universally this practice is requisite and necessary for the well governing of our heart. Politicians inculcate much, that to the well governing of a people, squaring fit laws for it, and keeping it in good order, the nature and humour of that people should be chiefly heeded and well understood; for that the grave Romans, and light Greeks; the soft Persians, and stout Germans; the subtle Africans, and gross Scythians, would not be well managed in the same

Digitized by Google

SERM. XL.

manner. So to govern any man's heart, (since the hearts of men, as their faces, and as their voices, differ according to diversities of complexion, of age, of education, of custom and manner of living,) it conduceth to know how it is disposed from any of those or the like causes[c]. But how we are to guide and govern our hearts, and what particular influence this practice hath thereupon, I reserve for other meditations; when we shall endeavour more distinctly to shew how we may apply our thoughts to due objects; how curb and correct our inclinations; how order our passions; how rectify our opinions; how purify our intentions: now I conclude with the good Psalmist's requests to God Almighty: *Teach us thy way, O Lord; unite our hearts to fear thy name. Give us understanding, and we shall keep thy law; yea, we shall observe it with our whole heart. Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts; see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.* Amen.

Ps. lxxvi. 11; cxix. 34; cxxxix. 23, 24.

[c] Vid. Greg. Naz. [Ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τοῖς σώμασιν οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν φαρμακείαν τε καὶ τροφὴν προσφέρονται, ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλην ἢ εὐεκτοῦντες, ἢ κάμνοντες, οὕτω καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς διαφόρῳ λόγῳ καὶ ἀγωγῇ θεραπεύονται.—Orat. II. Opp. Tom. I. p. 26 D.]

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLI.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

SERM. XLI.

THIS Psalm is upon several peculiar accounts very remarkable; for its antiquity, in which it perhaps doth not yield to any parcel of Scripture; for the eminency of its author, Moses, the man of God, the greatest of the ancient prophets, (most in favour, and, as it were, most intimate with God:) it is also remarkable for the form and matter thereof, both affording much useful instruction. In it we have a great prince, the governor of a numerous people, sequestering his mind from the management of public affairs to private meditations; from beholding the present outward appearances, to considering the real nature and secret causes of things; in the midst of all the splendour and pomp, of all the stir and tumult about him, he observes the frailty of human condition, he discerns the providence of God justly ordering all; this he does, not only in way of wise consideration, but of serious devotion, moulding his observations into pious acknowledgments and earnest prayers to God: thus while he casts one eye upon earth viewing the occurrences there, lifting up the other to heaven, there seeing God's all-governing hand, thence seeking his gracious favour and mercy. Thus doth

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

here that great and good man teach us all (more particularly men of high estate and much business) to find opportunities of withdrawing their thoughts from those things which commonly amuse them, (the cares, the glories, the pleasures of this world,) and fixing them upon matters more improvable to devotion; the transitoriness of their condition, and their subjection to God's just providence; joining also to these meditations suitable acts of Religion, due acknowledgments to God, and humble prayers. This was his practice among the greatest encumbrances that any man could have; and it should also be ours. Of those his devotions, addressed to God, the words are part, which I have chosen for the subject of my meditation and present discourse; concerning the meaning of which I shall first touch somewhat; then propound that observable in them, which I design to insist upon.

The Prophet David hath in the 39th Psalm a prayer very near in words, and of kin, it seems, in sense to this here; *Lord*, prays he, *make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am:* concerning the drift of which place, as well as of this here, it were obvious to conceive, that both these Prophets do request of God, that he would discover to them the definite term of their life, (which by his decree he had fixed, or however by his universal prescience he did discern; concerning which we have these words in Job, *Seeing man's days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass;*) we might, I say, at first hearing, be apt to imagine, that their prayer unto God is, (for the comfort of their mind

Ps. xxxix. 4.

Job xiv. 5.

Digitized by Google

burdened with afflictions, or for their better direction in the management of their remaining time of life,) that God would reveal unto them the determinate length of their life. But this sense, which the words seem so naturally to hold forth, is by many of the Fathers rejected, for that the knowledge of our lives' determinate measure is not a fit matter of prayer to God; that being a secret reserved by God to himself, which to inquire into savours of presumptuous curiosity: the universal validity of which reason I will not debate; but shall defer so much to their judgment, as to suppose, that the numbering of our days (according to their sense) doth here only imply a confused indefinite computation of our days' number, or the length of our life; such as, upon which it may appear, that necessarily our life cannot be long, (not, according to the account mentioned in this Psalm, the same with that of Solon in Herodotus[a], above 70 or 80 years, especially as to purposes of health, strength, content;) will probably, by reason of various accidents, to which it is exposed, be much shorter, (7 or 10 years, according to a moderate esteem;) may possibly, from surprises undiscoverable, be very near to its period; by few instants removed from death, (a year, a month, a day, it may be somewhat less.) This I shall allow to be the arithmetic that Moses here desires to learn; whence it will follow, that teaching (or making to know, so it is in the Hebrew) doth import here (as it doth otherwhere frequently in Scripture) God's affording the grace to know practically, or with serious regard to consider

[a] [Ἐς γὰρ ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτεα ὅρον τῆς ζόης ἀνθρώπῳ προτίθημι. I. 32.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

this state and measure of our life, (for in speculation no man can be ignorant of human life's brevity and uncertainity[b]; but most men are so negligent and stupid, as not to regard it sufficiently, not to employ this knowledge to any good purpose.) This interpretation I choose, being in itself plausible enough, and countenanced by so good authority; yet the former might well enough (by good consequence, if not so immediately) serve my design; or be a ground able to support the discourse I intend to build upon the words; the subject whereof briefly will be this, that the consideration of our lives' certain and necessary brevity and frailty, is a mean proper and apt to dispose us toward the wise conduct of our remaining life; to which purpose such a consideration seems alike available, as the knowledge of its punctual or definite measure; or more than it, upon the same or greater reasons.

As for the latter clause, *That we may apply our hearts to wisdom;* it is according to the Hebrew, *And we shall bring the heart to wisdom;* implying, the application of our hearts to wisdom to be consequent upon the skill and practice (bestowed by God) of thus computing our days. As for wisdom, that may denote either sapience, a habit of knowing what is true; or prudence, a disposition of choosing what is good: we may here understand both, especially the latter; for, as Tully saith of philosophy,

[b] Οὐ γάρ ἐστι φρένας ἔχοντος ἀνθρώπου ἀγνοεῖν, ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῶόν ἐστι θνητόν, οὐδ' ὅτι γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ἀποθανεῖν.—Plut. ad Apoll. Opp. Tom. I. p. 202. Ed. Steph.

Quis est tam stultus, quamvis sit adolescens, cui sit exploratum, se ad vesperum esse victurum?—Cic. de Sen. [cap. XIX. 67.]

At ea (natura) quidem dedit usuram vitæ, tanquam pecuniæ, nulla præstituta die.—Tusc. Quæst. I. [39, 93.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

Omnis summa philosophiæ ad beate vivendum referturº; The sum or whole of philosophy refers to living happily; so all divine wisdom doth respect good practice. The word also comprehends all the consequences and adjuncts of such wisdom; (for so commonly such words are wont by way of metonymy to denote, together with the things primarily signified, all that naturally flows from, or that usually are conjoined with them:) in brief, (to cease from more explaining that which is in itself conspicuous enough,) I so understand the text, as if the Prophet had thus expressed himself: Since, O Lord, all things are in thy hand and sovereign disposal; since it appears that man's life is so short and frail, so vexatious and miserable, so exposed to the just effects of thy displeasure; we humbly beseech thee, so to instruct us by thy wisdom, so to dispose us by thy grace, that we may effectually know, that we may seriously consider the brevity and uncertainity of our lives' durance; whence we may be induced to understand, regard, and choose those things which good reason dictates best for us; which, according to true wisdom, it most concerns us to know and perform. From which sense of the words we might infer many useful documents*; and draw matter of much wholesome discourse; but

º De Fin. II. [27, 86.]

* From whence we might infer these documents.

1 That the effectual knowledge of things, otherwise notorious and palpable, doth much depend upon the gracious instruction and influence of God upon our minds; that there is a certain secret passage between the head and the heart, which except he open, they will not have a due

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

passing over all the rest, I shall only insist upon that one point, which I before intimated, viz. that the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a proper instrument conducible to the bringing our hearts to wisdom, to the making us to discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things as are truly best for us; that it is available to the prudent conduct and management of our life; the truth of which proposition is grounded upon the divine Prophet's opinion: he apprehended such a knowledge or consideration to be a profitable means of inducing his heart to wisdom; wherefore he prays God to grant it him in order to that end, supposing that effect would proceed from this cause. And that it is so in way of reasonable influence, I shall endeavour to shew by some following reasons.

---

intercourse with each other; if God do not teach us, our notions will not kindly affect us; for what the Prophet here did otherwise well understand in theory, and which no man hardly can be ignorant of, he yet prays God (as the Psalmist and other of God's servants do in like cases frequently) to make known unto him.

2 That the ready means of obtaining such effectual knowledge is the having recourse to God by prayer for it; as the Prophet here doth, not relying upon his own reason and meditation, but imploring God's direction and furtherance. Which observations (grounded upon the practice and example of so great and good a man) would yield matter of wholesome and useful discourse; but my intention is at present to insist upon a third observation, for the sake of which, and to engage my thoughts upon meditation whereon, I did choose this text; and it is, that the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life, &c. MS.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

I. The serious consideration of our lives' frailty and shortness will confer to our right valuation (or esteem) of things, and consequently to our well placing, and our duly moderating our cares, affections, and endeavours about them[d]. For as we value things, so are we used to affect them, to spend our thought upon them, to be earnest in pursuance or avoiding of them. There be two sorts of things we converse about; good and bad; the former, according to the degree of their appearance so to us, (that is, according to our estimation of them,) we naturally love, delight in, desire, and pursue; the other likewise, in proportion to our opinion concerning them, we do more or less loathe and shun. Our actions therefore being all thus directed and grounded, to esteem things aright both in kind and degree, (Τὴν ἀξίαν ἑκάστῳ ἀποδιδόναι, *To assign every thing its due price;* as Epictetus[e] speaks; *Quanti quidque sit judicare, To judge what each thing is worth;* as Seneca[f],) is in order the first, in degree a main part of wisdom; and as so is frequently by wise men commended. Now among qualities that commend or vilify things unto us, duration and certainty have a chief place; they often alone suffice to render things valuable or contemptible. Why is gold more precious than glass or crystal? Why prefer we a ruby before a rose or a gilliflower? It is not because those are more serviceable, more beautiful, more grateful to our

[d] *Love not the world; for—the world passeth away, and the desire thereof.*—1 John ii. 15, 17.

[e] Epict. [Diss. II. 23, 23.]

[f] Primum enim est, ut quanti quidque sit, judices; secundum, ut impetum ad illa capias ordinatum temperatumque; tertium, ut inter impetum tuum, actionemque conveniat, ut in omnibus istis tibi ipsi consentias.—Sen. Ep. LXXXIX. [13.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

senses, than these, (it is plainly otherwise;) but because these are brittle and fading, those solid and permanent: these we cannot hope to retain the use or pleasure of long; those we may promise ourselves to enjoy so long as we please. Whence, on the other side, is it, that we little fear or shun any thing, how painful, how offensive soever, being assured of its soon passing over, the biting of a flea, or the prick in letting blood? The reason is evident; and that in general nothing can on either hand be considerable (either to value or disesteem) which is of a short continuance. Upon this ground, therefore, let us tax the things concerning us, whether good or bad, relating to this life, or to our future state; and first the good things relating to this life; thence we shall be disposed to judge truly concerning them, what their just price is, how much of affection, care, and endeavour they deserve to have expended on them. In general, and in the lump concerning them all, St Paul tells us, that, Τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου παράγει, *The shape* or *fashion* (all that is apparent or sensible) *in this present world doth flit, and soon gives us the go-by:* we gaze a while upon these things, as *in transitu*, or *intra conspectum*, as they pass by us[g], and keep a while in sight; but they are presently gone from us, or we from them. They are but like objects represented in a glass; which having viewed a while, we must shortly turn our backs, or shut our eyes upon them, then all vanishes, and disappears unto us.

1 Cor. vii. 31.

[g] [Θνητὰ τὰ τῶν θνητῶν, καὶ] πάντα παρέρχεται ἡμᾶς·
ἦν δὲ μή, ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς αὐτὰ παρερχόμεθα —
Gr. Epig. Anthol [Lucill. CXVIII. Anthol. Gr. Ed. Jacobs. Tom. III. p. 53.]

Digitized by Google

Whence he well infers an indifferency of affection toward them; a slackness in the enjoyment of them to be required of us; a using this world, as if we used it not; a buying, as if we were not to possess; a weeping, as if we wept not; and a rejoicing, as if we rejoiced not; a kind of negligence and unconcernedness about these things, *The world,* saith St John, *passeth away, and the desire thereof,* ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ: whatever seemeth most lovely and desirable in the world is very flitting; however, our desire and our enjoyment thereof must suddenly cease. Imagine a man therefore possessed of all worldly goods, armed with power, flourishing in credit, flowing with plenty, swimming in all delight, (such as were sometime Priamus, Polycrates, Crœsus, Pompey;) yet since he is withal supposed a man, and mortal, subject both to fortune and death, none of those things can he reasonably confide or much satisfy himself in; they may be violently divorced from him by fortune, they must naturally be loosed from him by death; the closest union here cannot last longer than till death do part us: wherefore no man upon such account can truly call, or (if he consider well) heartily esteem himself happy*; *A man cannot* hence (as the most able judge

SERM. XLI.

1 Cor. vii. 30, 31.

1 John ii. 17.

Eccles. i. 3, &c.

* Therefore no man upon such accounts can truly call or heartily esteem himself happy: happy, that which all men have most impatiently desired to be, and philosophers[h] most busily have enquired what it is to be: Aristotle his management of the disquisition concerning that point is remarkable: he observing, that from the several inclinations of men did arise divers opinions concerning the nature of

[h] Omnis auctoritas philosophiæ consistit in beata vita comparanda.—Theophrastus apud Cic. de Fin. v. [29, 86.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

and trusty voucher of these commodities doth pronounce) *receive profit or content from any labour he*

happiness, and that every one would have it consist in what himself was most addicted to; the political man in honour and power; the studious man in contemplation and knowledge; the sensual man in fruition of pleasure; the covetous man in gathering and possessing riches; the (φιλόκαλος) well-meaning and plausible man in the practice of virtue; but withal taking notice, that according to the judgment of common sense all these conceits were liable to great exceptions; seeing other of the particulars were very subject to change (from the inconstancy both of fortune[1] and vulgar opinion), and that pleasure was too mean and bestial a thing to constitute the perfection of a man's state; and that virtue and wisdom could not alone suffice to that purpose; for if a virtuous man were oppressed with grievous diseases, wants, troubles, and disgraces, who could seriously esteem that man happy? he therefore chose to place it (and that it seems as wisely as a man could devise, who was resolved to place nothing somewhere) in the aggregation and confluence of all these; in the substance of virtue, in the ornament of honour, the convenience of wealth and plenty amassed together in one subject; but he might have considered, that all the objections against each particular opinion would combine in assaulting his; that his composition did contain in it all the imperfection of its ingredients; the baseness and slovenliness of pleasure; the mutability of honour and wealth; the liableness of virtue and wisdom to be deserted by the rest. Beside that this knot of good things can hardly be tied, at least never so fast but that it may easily be dissolved. Perhaps also there is some inconsistency in the parts which he compounds together: virtue always or most commonly being incompatible with great prosperity; it hath envy and enmity to contest with, adversities to sustain, difficulties to

[1] Τὸ δὲ μέγιστον καὶ κάλλιστον ἐπιτρέψαι τύχῃ, λίαν πλημμελὲς ἂν εἴη.—[Ethic. I. 9. 6.]

Digitized by Google

taketh (upon these transitory things) *under the sun.* Why then, let me inquire, do we so cumber our SERM. XLI.

---

overcome: I may add, that no affluence of all imaginable goods can satiate the restless and fastidious nature; the wandering and infinite desire of man's mind; whence whatever else it doth enjoy, it will always want quiet and satisfaction, without which how can a man be deemed happy? He might therefore perchance have better resolved the question by taking away the subject thereof, admitting that happiness was only a name having nothing real answerable thereto; that among these things there was not to be found any τέλειον, αὐταρκές, μόνιμον, μὴ εὐμετάβολον ἀγαθόν, no good having those conditions of perfect, self-sufficient, durable, hardly changeable, (which conditions he ascribes to the thing, called happiness, enquired after), that, I say, such a good was a bare chimera, there being no such thing, nor any ground for it, to be met with in the nature of things with which he was acquainted; for that if life itself, the subject and foundation of all things belonging to man, be infirm and unstable, how can the appurtenances thereof, any structure reared thereupon, be capable of those privileges? The philosopher would have his happy man, as he saith, no chameleon, easily transformed from healthy to sick, from rich to needy, from honourable to contemptible, from joyful and contented to sad and dissatisfied. But with Juvenal[k] we may ask the question:

Sed quæ præclara, et prospera tanti,
Ut rebus lætis par sit mensura malorum?

What brave and prosperous state of man is this, wherein the measure of inconveniences does not exceed that of contents? Where in this sea of human life could he find such a ship, tossed with no winds, free from all fluctuations? A man exempt[l], if from present inconvenience, yet from suspicion and fear of many future ones, and that consequently could

[k] [Sat. x. 97.]

[l] Ἔξω βέλους, beyond the reach of adverse fortune.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

heads with care, so rack our hearts with passion, so waste our spirits with incessant toil about these transitory things? Why do we so highly value, so

---

with much reason please himself and rest fully satisfied in his condition? (since, In æquo est amissio rei et timor amittendæ[m]; *'Tis all one to lose a thing and to be jealous of losing it*) whom at least the consideration of death's (perhaps sudden) supervening to ravish him from his mass of prosperities will not disgust and discompose. Si amitti vita beata potest, beata esse non potest[n], *If a happy life may be lost, it cannot be happy*, and what life is there, or what state of life, which cannot be lost? Solon's problem did much trouble the philosophers to resolve: since a man may not be called happy during life (for that he cannot be secure from falling into those τύχαι πριάμικαι, partaking of Priam his lot, to be spoiled of all the comforts and conveniences of life), when can he be termed so? If at, or after death, then begins he to be happy, when he ceases to be, and that beatifies him, which destroys him (for all that those men knew or supposed): in life man can have no steady or assured condition; and therefore no happiness; after death 'tis too late; he hath then no being able to support such a denomination: he hath been somewhat, may be said; he is either happy or unhappy cannot be affirmed. What happiness therefore was, nor where situated, nor when possessed, could that otherwise clear sighted wise man discern (for want of better spectacles than nature or common experience did afford): even his own discourse may assure us, that it is nowhere conversant among these transitory things: in this state of lapse from our integrity, this exile from God, this condemnation we lie under to a painful life and a certain death, no such thing is to be hoped for or aimed at: fools may dream of, but no wise man could ever find a paradise in this world: we cannot so easily evacuate God's sentence, or elude our fate. Why then do we so, &c. MS.

[m] Sen. Ep. XCVIII. [n] Apud Cic. alicubi. [De Fin. II. 27, 86.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

ardently desire, so eagerly pursue, so fondly delight in, so impatiently want, or lose, so passionately contend for and emulate one another in regard to these bubbles; forfeiting and foregoing our home-bred most precious goods, tranquillity and repose, either of mind or body, for them? Why erect we such mighty fabrics of expectation and confidence, upon such unsteady sands? Why dress we up these our inns, as if they were our homes, and are as careful about a few nights' lodging here, as if we designed an everlasting abode[o]? we that are but *Sojourners and pilgrims* here, and have no fixed habitation upon earth; *Who come forth like a flower, and are soon cut down; Flee like a shadow, and continue not; Are winds, passing away, and coming not again; Who fade all like a leaf; Whose life is a vapour, appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away; Whose days are a handbreadth, and age is nothing; Whose days are consumed like smoke, and years are spent as a tale; Who wither like the grass,* upon which we feed, and crumble as the dust, of which we are compacted; (for thus the Scripture by apposite comparisons represents our condition;) yet we build, like the men of Agrigentum, as if we were to dwell here for ever; and hoard up, as if we were to enjoy after many ages; and inquire, as if we would never have done knowing. The citizens of Croton, a town in Italy, had a manner, it is said, of inviting to feasts a year before the time, that the guests in appetite and garb might come well prepared to them. Do we not usually resemble them in this ridiculous solicitude and

1 Pet. ii. 11. Heb. xiii. 14; xi. 15. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Job xiv. 1, 2. Ps. lxxviii. 39. James iv. 14. Isai. lxiv. 6. Ps. cii. 3; xc. 5, 9; ciii. 15; xxxix. 5; cxliv. 4; ciii. 15. Isai. xl. 6.

[o] Commorandi enim natura deversorium nobis, non habitandi locum dedit.—Cic. de Sen. [cap. XXIII. 84.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

curiosity; *Spes inchoando longas*[p], commencing designs, driving on projects, which a longer time than our life would not suffice to accomplish? How deeply do we concern ourselves in all that is said or done; when the morrow all will be done away and forgotten; when (excepting what our duty to God and charity towards men requires of us, and that which concerns our future eternal state) what is done in the world, who gets or loses, which of the spokes in fortune's wheel is up, and which down, is of very little consequence to us! But the more to abstract our minds from, and temper our affections about these secular matters, let us examine particularly by this standard, whether the most valued things in this world deserve that estimate which they bear in the common market, or which popular opinion assigns them.

1 To begin then with that which takes chief place, which the world most dotes on, which seems most great and eminent among men; secular state and grandeur, might and prowess, honour and reputation, favour and applause of men, all the objects of human pride and ambition: of this kind,

1 Pet. i. 24. St Peter thus pronounces, Πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου, *All the glory of man is as the flower of the grass; the grass is dried up, and the flower thereof doth fall off;* it is as the flower of the grass, how specious soever, yet the most fading and failing part thereof; the grass itself will soon wither, and the flower doth commonly fall off before that. We cannot hold this flower of worldly glory beyond our short time of life; and we may easily much sooner be

[p] [Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam.] Hor. Carm. 1. 4. 15.

Digitized by Google

deprived of it: many tempests of fortune may beat it down, many violent hands may crop it; it is apt of itself to fade upon the stalk; however the sun (the influence of age and time) will assuredly burn and dry it up, with our life that upholds it. *Surely,* saith the Psalmist, *men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie:* men of high degree; the mighty princes, the famous captains, the subtle statesmen, the grave senators; they who turn and toss about the world at their pleasure; who, in the Prophet's language, make the earth tremble, and shake kingdoms: even these we may be bold to give them all the lie: they are a lie, (said he, who himself was none of the least considerable among them, and by experience well knew their condition, the greatest and most glorious man of his time, king David.) They are a lie; that is, their state presents something of brave and admirable to the eye of men; but it is only *deceptio visus;* a show without a substance; it doth but delude the careless spectators with false appearance; it hath nothing under it solid or stable; being laid in the balance, (the royal Prophet there subjoins; that is, being weighed in the scales of right judgment, being thoroughly considered,) it will prove lighter than vanity itself; it is less valuable than mere emptiness, and nothing itself. That saying sounds like an hyperbole; but it may be true in a strict sense, seeing that the care and pains in maintaining it, the fear and jealousy of losing it, the envy, obloquy, and danger that surround it, the snares it hath in it, and temptations inclining men to be puffed up with pride, to be insolent and injurious, to be corrupted

SERM. XLI.

Ps. lxii. 9.

Isai. xiv. 16, 17.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

with pleasure, (with other bad concomitants thereof,) do more than countervail whatever either of imaginary worth or real convenience may be in it. Perhaps, could it, without much care, trouble, and hazard, continue for ever, or for a long time, it might be thought somewhat considerable: but since its duration is uncertain and short; since

Ps. xlix. 12, &c. lxxxii. 6, 7.

Man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish; that they who look so like gods, and are called so, and are worshipped as so, *yet must die like men,* like men, yea *like sheep shall be laid in the grave;* since, as it is said of the king of

Isai. xiv. 11.

Babylon in Isaiah, *Their pomp must be brought down to the grave, and the noise of their viols; the worm shall be spread under them, and the worm shall cover them;* seeing that a moment of time shall extinguish all their lustre, and still all that tumult about them; that they must be disrobed of their purple, and be clothed with corruption; that their so spacious and splendid palaces must soon be exchanged for close darksome coffins; that both their own breath, and the breath of them who now applaud them, must be stopped; that they who now bow to them, may presently trample on them; and they, who to-day trembled at their presence, may the morrow scornfully insult upon their memory: *Is this the man* (will they say, as they did of that great king) *who made the earth to tremble; that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the kingdoms thereof?*

Isai. xiv. 16.

Since this is the fate of the greatest and most glorious among men, what reason can there be to admire their condition, to prize such vain and shortlived pre-eminences? For who can account it

Digitized by Google

a great happiness to be styled and respected as a prince, to enjoy all the powers and prerogatives of highest dignity for a day or two; then being obliged to descend into a sordid and despicable estate? Who values the fortune of him that is brought forth upon the stage to act the part of a prince; though he be attired there, and attended as such; hath all the garb and ceremony, the ensigns and appurtenances of majesty about him; speaks and behaves himself imperiously; is flattered and worshipped accordingly; yet who in his heart doth adore this idol, doth admire this mockery of greatness? Why not? Because after an hour or two the play is over, and this man's reign is done. And what great difference is there between this and the greatest worldly state? between Alexander in the history, and Alexander on the stage? Are not (in the Psalmist's account) all our years spent as a tale that is told, or as a fable that is acted? This in comparison of that, what is it at most, but telling the same story, acting the same part a few times over? What are a few years more than a few hours repeated not very often? not so often as to make any considerable difference: so a great emperor[q] reflected; Τί διαφέρει ὁ τριήμερος τοῦ τριγερηνίου; *What,* said he, *doth the age of an infant, dying within three days, differ from that of Nestor, who lived three ages of men?* since both shall be past and ended; both then meet, and thereby become equal; since, considering the immense time that runs on, and how little a part thereof any of us takes up, *Juvenes et senes in æquo sumus*[r], *We*

SERM. XLI.

Ps. xc. 9.

[q] M. Ant. IV. § 50.

[r] [Omnes ad brevitatem ævi, si universo compares, et juvenes et senes in æquo sumus.—Sen. Ep. XCIX.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

are all alike young and old, as a drop and a pint bottle in compare to the ocean are in a sort equal, that is, both altogether inconsiderable[s]. *Quid enim diu est, ubi finis est?* saith St Austin[t]; *What can be long that shall be ended?* which coming to that pass is as if it never had been. Since then upon this account (upon worldly accounts I speak all this; and excepting that dignity and power may be talents bestowed by God, or advantages to serve God, and promote the good of men; excepting also the relation persons justly instated in them bear to God, as his deputies and ministers; in which respects much reverence is due to their persons, much value to their places; even the more, by how much less their present outward estate is considerable, and because at present they receive so slender a reward for all their cares and pains employed in the discharge of their offices; this I interpose to prevent mistake, lest our discourse should seem to disparage or detract from the reverence due to persons in eminent place. But since, under this caution) all worldly power and glory appear so little valuable, the consideration hereof may avail to moderate our affections about them, to quell all ambitious desires of them, and all vain complacencies in them. For why should we so eagerly seek and pursue such empty shadows, which if we catch, we in effect catch nothing; and whatever it is, doth presently slip out of our hands? Why do we please ourselves in such evanid dreams? Is it not much better to rest quiet and

[s] Mihi ne diuturnum quidem quidquam videtur, in quo est aliquid extremum. &c.—Cic. de Sen. [cap. XIX. 69.]

[t] [Serm. CXXIV. Opp. Tom. V. col. 604 G.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

content in any station wherein God hath placed us, than to trouble ourselves and others in climbing higher to a precipice, where we can hardly stand upright, and whence we shall certainly tumble down into the grave? This consideration is also a remedy proper to remove all regret and envy grounded upon such regards. For why, though suppose men of small worth or virtue should flourish in honour and power, shall we repine thereat? Is it not as if one should envy to a butterfly its gaudy wings, to a tulip its beautiful colours, to the grass its pleasant verdure; that grass, to which in this Psalm we are compared; *Which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening is cut down and withereth?* I may say of this discourse with the philosopher[u], Ἰδιωτικὸν μέν, ὅμως δὲ ἀνυτικὸν βοήθημα, *It is a homely remedy,* (there may be divers better ones,) *yet hath its efficacy;* for David himself made use thereof more than once: *Be not,* saith he, *afraid, or troubled, when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend with him. I was,* saith he again, *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked; but I went into the sanctuary, then understood I their end: surely thou didst set them in slippery places—how are they brought into desolation as in a moment!* Thus considering the lubricity and transitoriness of that prosperity, which foolish and wicked men enjoyed, did serve to cure that envious distemper which began to affect the good man's heart.

Ps. xc. 6.

Ps. xlix. 16, 17.

Ps. lxxiii. 3, 17, 18, 19; xxxvii. 1, 2.

[u] M. Ant. iv. § 50.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

2 But let us descend from dignity and power (that is, from names and shows) to somewhat seeming more real and substantial, to riches; that great and general idol, the most devoutly adored that ever any hath been in the world; which hath a temple almost in every house, an altar in every heart; to the gaining of which most of the thoughts, most of the labours of men immediately tend; in the possession of which men commonly deem the greatest happiness doth consist. But this consideration we discourse about will easily discover, that even this, as all other idols, is *Nothing in the world,* nothing true and solid; will, I say, justify that advice, and verify that assertion of the Wise Man; *Labour not for riches; Wilt thou set thy heart upon that which is not?* It, well applied, will pluck down the high places reared to this great idol of clay in men's hearts; will confute the common conceits and phrases[x], which so beatify wealth; shewing that whoever dotes thereon is more truly and properly styled a miserable man, than a happy or blessed one: for is he not indeed miserable, who makes lies his refuge, who confides in that which will deceive and disappoint him? The Prophet assures us so: *Woe,* saith the Prophet Habakkuk, *woe be to him who coveteth an evil covetousness to his house: that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!* Men, he implies, imagine by getting riches, they have secured and raised themselves above the reach of all mischief: but ye see it was in the Prophet's judgment a woful mistake. St Paul doth warn men very emphatically, *Not to hope* ἐπὶ πλούτου

1 Cor. viii. 4.

Prov. xxiii. 4, 5.

Isai. xxviii. 15.

Hab. ii. 9.

1 Tim. vi. 17.

[x] Ὄλβιος, beatus, &c. pro divite.

Digitized by Google

ἀδηλότητι, *in the uncertainty,* or *obscurity of riches;* intimating, that to trust in them, is to trust in darkness itself; in that wherein we can discern nothing; in we know not what. They are, we cannot but observe, subject to an infinity of chances*, many of them obvious and notorious; more of them secret and unaccountable. *They make,* the Wise Man tells us, *themselves wings,* (they need, it seems, no help for that,) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven,* (quite out of sight, and beyond our reach, they of their own accord do swiftly fly away:) however, should they be disposed to stay with us, we must fly from them; were they inseparably affixed to this life, yet must they together with that be severed from us; as we came naked of them into this world, so naked shall we return: *As he came,* saith the Preacher, *so shall he go; and what profit* (then) *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* From hence, that we must so soon part with riches, he infers them to be but wind; a thing not anywise to be fixed or settled; which it is vain to think we can appropriate or retain; and vain therefore greedily to covet, or pursue: so the Psalmist also reasons it: *Surely every man,* saith he, *walketh in a vain*

SERM. XLI.

Prov. xxiii. 5.

Job i. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 7. Eccles. v. 15, 16.

Ps. xxxix. 6.

* They are subject to an infinity of chances: to the mercy of all elements; to sea and land; winds, rocks, and quicksands; fire and weather; rust and mildew; worms and vermin; to thieves and pirates; enemies and plunderers; perfidious negligent idle servants, and dishonest friends; prodigal children and needy kindred; to the just providence of heaven; to our own expensive vices and vain projects; to the fraud and violence, the mistakes and mischances of men; in fine to many unaccountable accidents. MS.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. Men, in his account, that troubled themselves in accumulating wealth, did but idly delude themselves, fancying to receive content from such things, which they must themselves soon be separated from; and leave at uncertainties, to be disposed of they know not how: that which in his wise son's esteem was sufficient to make a man hate all his labour under the sun: *Because,* saith he, *I shall leave it to the man that shall be after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet he shall have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun:* all, it seems, that we are so wise and so industrious about, that we so beat our heads about, and spend our spirits upon, is at most but *gaudium hæredis, the joy of an heir,* and that an uncertain one, (for your son, your kinsman, your friend, may, for all you can know, die before you, or soon after you;) it is but a being at great pains and charges in tilling the land, and sowing and dressing it; whence we are sure not to reap any benefit to ourselves, and cannot know who shall do it[y].

Eccles. ii. 18, 19.

The rich man, St James tells us, *as the flower of the grass shall he pass away; for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion thereof perisheth; so also shall*

James i. 10, 11.

[y] Sed iidem elaborant in eis, quæ sciunt nihil omne ad se pertinere.

Serit arbores, quæ alteri sæculo prosint, ut ait Statius noster, &c. —Cic. de Senect. [cap. VII. 24.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

the rich man fade in his ways. All the comfort (we see by the Apostle's discourse) and the convenience, all the grace and ornament, that riches are supposed to yield, will certainly wither and decay, either before or with us; whenever the sun (that is, either some extreme mischance in life, or the certain destiny of death) doth arise, and make impression on them. But our Saviour hath best set out the nature and condition of these things, in that parable concerning the man, who, having had a plentiful crop of corn, and having projected for the disposal of it, resolved then to bless himself, and entertain his mind with pleasing discourses, that having in readiness and security so copious accommodations, he might now enjoy himself with full satisfaction and delight, not considering, that, though his barns were full, his life was not sure; that God's pleasure might soon interrupt his pastime; that the fearful sentence might presently be pronounced: *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee; and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall?* Euripides[z] calls riches Φιλόψυχον χρῆμα, *A thing which much endears life,* or makes men greatly love it; but they do not at all enable to keep it: there is no Ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς, no price or ransom equivalent to life: *All that a man hath, he would give* to redeem it; but it is a purchase too dear for all the riches in the world to compass. So the Psalmist tells us: *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a*

Luke xii. 19.

ver. 20.

Matt. xvi. 26. Job ii. 4.

Ps. xlix. 6, 7, 8.

[z] [Δειλὸν δ' ὁ πλοῦτος καὶ φιλόψυχον κακόν.— Phœn. 597.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious. They cannot redeem their brother's soul or life, nor therefore their own; for all souls are of the same value, all greatly surpass the price of gold and silver. Life was not given us for perpetuity, but lent, or deposited with us; and without delay or evasion it must be resigned into the hand of its just owner, when he shall please to demand it; and although righteousness may, yet *Riches*, as the Prov. xi. 4. Wise Man tells us, *cannot deliver from death, nor at all profit us in the day of wrath.* Could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands; nay, could we certainly foresee some considerably long definite time, in which we might enjoy our stores, it were perhaps somewhat excusable to scrape and hoard, it might look like rational providence, it might yield some valuable satisfaction; but since, *Rape, congere, aufer, posside: relinquendum est*[a]: since, as Solomon tells us, Prov. xxvii. 24. *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to every generation;* yea, since they must be left very soon, nor is there any certainty of keeping them any time; that one day may consume them, one night may dispossess us of them and our life together with them, there can be no reason why we should be solicitous about them; no account given of our setting so high a rate upon them. For who would much regard the having custody of a rich treasure for a day or two, then to be stripped of all, and left bare*? to be to-day invested

[a] [Mart. VIII. 44, 9.]

* For who would regard the having custody of a rich treasure for a day or two; then to be left bare and naked;

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

in large domains, and to-morrow to be dispossessed of them? No man surely would be so fond, as much to affect the condition. Yet this is our case; whatever we call ours, we are but guardians thereof for a few days. This consideration therefore may serve to repress or moderate in us all covetous desires, proud conceits, vain confidences and satisfactions in respect to worldly wealth; to induce us, in Job's language, *Not to make gold our hope, nor to say to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; nor to rejoice because our wealth is great, and because our hand hath gotten much;* to extirpate from our hearts that *Root of all evil, the love of money.* For if, as the Preacher thought, the greatest pleasure or benefit accruing from them, is but looking upon them for a while; (*What good,* saith he, *is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*) if a little will, nay must suffice our natural appetites, and our

Job xxxi. 24, 25.

1 Tim. vi. 10.

Eccles. v. 11.

---

to dwell in Potosy, in the midst of the richest mine, encircled with all the wealth of Peru, without right or capacity to use it; to be factor for millions in another's behalf, oneself perceiving little or no benefit therefrom; to be titular master (as the Spaniard of Hierusalem) of large domains, which we be far enough from ever enjoying? None surely would be so fond, as much to affect being so. Yet 'tis our case; if the witty Stoic says true, (and surely he doth, for sacred authority we saw doth consent,) Quicquid est cui dominus inscriberis, apud te est, tuum non est; nihil firmum infirmo, nihil fragile æternum et invictum est[b]. *Whatever calls us Lord, and bears our inscription is with us, but is not ours; nothing can be firm to that which is infirm; nothing eternal and immutable to that which itself is frail and unstable.* MS.

[b] [Sen. Ep. XCVIII.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

present necessities; if more than needs is but, as the Scripture teaches us, a trouble, disquieting our minds with care; a dangerous snare, drawing us into mischief and sorrow; if this, I say, be their present quality; and were it better, yet could it last for any certain, or any long continuance, is it not evidently better to enjoy that pittance God hath allotted us with ease and contentation of mind[c]; or if we want a necessary supply, to employ only a moderate diligence in getting thereof by the fairest means, which, with God's blessing promised thereto, will never fail to procure a competence; and with this to rest content; than with those in Amos, *To pant after the dust of the earth; To lade ourselves with thick clay;* to thirst insatiably after floods of gold, to heap up mountains of treasure, to extend unmeasurably our possessions, (*Joining house to house, and laying field to field, till there be no place, that we may be placed alone in the midst of the earth,* as the prophet Isaiah doth excellently describe the covetous man's humour;) than, I say, thus incessantly to toil for the maintenance of this frail body, this flitting breath of ours? If divine bounty hath freely imparted a plentiful estate upon us, we should indeed bless God for it; making ourselves friends thereby, as our Saviour advises us, employing it to God's praise and service; to the relief and comfort of our brethren that need: but to seek it earnestly, to set our heart upon it, to rely thereon, to be greatly pleased or elevated in mind thereby, as it argues much infidelity and profaneness of heart, so it signifies much

Eccles. v. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Matt. vi. 25. Heb. xiii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 8. Ps. lv. 22. Amos ii. 7. Hab. ii. 6. Isai. v. 8. Luke xvi. 9.

[c] Simplici cura constant necessaria; in delicias laboratur.—Sen. [Ep. xc. 14.]

Digitized by Google

inconsiderateness and folly, the ignorance of its nature, the forgetfulness of our own condition, upon the grounds discoursed upon.

3 Now in the next place; for pleasure, that great witch, which so enchants the world, and which by its mischievous baits so allures mankind into sin and misery; although this consideration be not altogether necessary to disparage it, (its own nature sufficing to that; for it is more transitory than the shortest life, it dies in the very enjoyment,) yet it may conduce to our wise and good practice in respect thereto, by tempering the sweetness thereof, yea souring its relish to us; minding us of its insufficiency and unserviceableness to the felicity of a mortal creature; yea, its extremely dangerous consequences to a soul that must survive the short enjoyment thereof. Some persons indeed, ignorant or incredulous of a future state; presuming of no sense remaining after death, nor regarding any account to be rendered of this life's actions, have encouraged themselves and others in the free enjoyment of present sensualities, upon the score of our life's shortness and uncertainty; inculcating such maxims as these:

> Brevis hic est fructus homullis[d];
> Post mortem nulla voluptas:

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die; 1 Cor. xv. 32. because our life is short, let us make the most advantageous use thereof we can[e]; because death

[d] Lucret. [III. 927.]

[e] Quem Fors dierum cunque dabit, lucro
Appone; nec dulces amores
Sperne puer, &c.—
Hor. Carm. I 9. 14.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

is uncertain, let us prevent its surprisal, and be aforehand with it, enjoying somewhat, before it snatches all from us. The author of Wisdom observed, and thus represents these men's discourse:

Sap. ii. 1, &c. *Our life is short and tedious; and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave:— Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of voluptuousness—for this is our portion, and our lot is this.* Thus, and no wonder, have some men, conceiving themselves beasts, resolved to live as such; renouncing all sober care becoming men, and drowning their reason in brutish sensualities; yet no question, the very same reflection, that this life would soon pass away, and that death might speedily attack them, did not a little quash their mirth, and damp their pleasure. To think, that this perhaps might be the last banquet they should taste of; that they should themselves shortly become the feast of worms and serpents, could not but somewhat spoil the gust of their highest delicacies, and disturb the sport of their loudest jovialties; but in Job's expression,

Job xx. 14. *Make the meat in their bowels to turn, and be as the gall of asps within them.* Those customary enjoyments did so enamour them of sensual delight, that they could not without pungent regret imagine a necessity of soon for ever parting with them; and so their very pleasure was by this

Digitized by Google

thought made distasteful and imbittered to them. So did the Wise Man observe: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions; unto the man that hath nothing to vex him; and that hath prosperity in all things; Yea,* adds he, *unto him, that is yet able to receive meat!* And how bitter then must the remembrance thereof be to him, who walloweth in all kind of corporal satisfaction and delight; that placeth all his happiness in sensual enjoyment! However, as to us, who are better instructed and affected; who know and believe a future state; the consideration, that the time of enjoying these delights will soon be over; that this world's jollity is but like *The crackling of thorns under a pot,* (which yields a brisk sound, and a cheerful blaze, but heats little, and instantly passes away;) that they leave no good fruits behind them, but do only corrupt and enervate our minds; war against and hurt our souls; tempt us to sin, and involve us in guilt; that therefore Solomon was surely in the right, when he said of *Laughter* that *it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it?* (that is, that the highest of these delights are very irrational impertinences;) and of intemperance, that, at the last, *It biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder;* with us, I say who reflect thus, that Πρόσκαιρος ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσις, *Enjoyment of sinful pleasure for a season* cannot obtain much esteem and love; but will rather, I hope, be despised and abhorred by us. I will add only,

Ecclus. xli. 1.

Eccles. vii. 6.

Eccles. ii. 2.

Prov. xxiii. 32.

Heb. xi. 25.

4 Concerning secular wisdom and knowledge[f];

[f] Δοκεῖ γοῦν ἡ σοφία θαυμαστὰς ἡδονὰς ἔχειν καθαριότητι, καὶ τῷ βεβαίῳ.—Arist. Eth. x. 7. [3.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

the which men do also commonly with great earnestness and ambition seek after, as the most specious ornament, and pure content of their mind; this consideration doth also detect the just value thereof; so as to allay intemperate ardour toward it, pride and conceitedness upon the having or seeming to have it, envy and emulation about it. For imagine, if you please, a man accomplished with all varieties of learning commendable, able to recount all the stories that have been ever written, or the deeds acted, since the world's beginning; to understand, or with the most delightful fluency and elegancy to speak all the languages, that have at any time been in use among the sons of men; skilful in twisting and untwisting all kinds of subtleties; versed in all sorts of natural experiments, and ready to assign plausible conjectures about the causes of them; studied in all books whatever, and in all monuments of antiquity; deeply knowing in all the mysteries of art, or science, or policy, such as have ever been devised by human wit, or study, or observation; yet all this, such is the pity, he must be forced presently to abandon; all the use he could make of all his notions, the pleasure he might find in them, the reputation accruing to him from them, must at that fatal minute vanish; *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither he goeth. It is seen,* saith the Psalmist, seen indeed every day, and observed by all, *that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish person perisheth; One event happeneth to them both; There is no remembrance*

Ps. cxlvi. 4.

Eccles. ix. 10.

Ps. xlix. 10.

Eccles. ii. 14, 16, &c.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

of the wise more than of the fool for ever; (both die alike, both alike are forgotten;) as the wisest man himself did (not without some distaste) observe and complain. All our subtle conceits and nice criticisms, all our fine inventions and goodly speculations, shall be swallowed up either in the utter darkness, or in the clearer light, of the future state. One potion of that Lethean cup (which we must all take down upon our entrance into that *Land of forgetfulness*) will probably drown the memory, deface the shape of all those ideas, with which we have here stuffed our minds[g]: however they are not like to be of use to us in that new, so different, state; where none of our languages are spoken; none of our experience will suit; where all things have quite another face, unknown, unthought of by us; where Aristotle and Varro shall appear mere idiots; Demosthenes and Cicero shall become very infants; the wisest and eloquentest Greeks will prove senseless and dumb barbarians; where all our authors shall have no authority; where we must all go fresh to school again; must unlearn, perhaps, what in these misty regions we thought ourselves best to know, and begin to learn what we not once ever dreamed of. Doth, therefore, I pray you, so transitory and fruitless a good (for itself I mean, and excepting our duty to God, or the reasonable diligence we are bound to use in our calling) deserve such anxious desire, or so restless toil; so careful attention of mind, or assiduous pain of body about it? doth it become us to contend,

Ps. lxxxviii. 12.

[g] Τὴν δ' Ἰσοκράτους διατριβὴν ἐπισκώπτων, γηρᾷν φησι παρ' αὐτῷ τοὺς μαθητάς, ὡς ἐν ᾄδου χρησομένους ταῖς τέχναις, καὶ δίκας ἐροῦντας. —Cato Sen. apud Plut. Opp. Tom. v. p. 641. Ed. Steph.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

or emulate so much about it? Above all, do we not most unreasonably, and against the nature of the thing itself we pretend to, (that is, ignorantly and foolishly,) if we are proud and conceited, much value ourselves or contemn others, in respect thereto? Solomon, the most experienced in this matter, and best able to judge thereof, (he that gave his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that had been done under heaven, and this with extreme success; even he) passeth the same sentence of vanity, vexation, and unprofitableness, upon this, as upon all other subcelestial things. True, he commends wisdom as an excellent and useful thing[h] comparatively; *Exceeding folly, so far as light exceedeth darkness;* but since light itself is not permanent, but must give way to darkness, the difference soon vanished, and his opinion thereof abated; considering, that as it happened to the fool, so it happened to him, he breaks into that expostulation; *And why then was I more wise?* to what purpose was such a distinction made, that signified in effect so little? And, indeed, the testimony of this great personage may serve for a good epilogue to all this discourse, discovering sufficiently the slender worth of all earthly things: seeing he, that had given himself industriously to experiment the worth of all things here below, to sound the depth of their utmost perfection and use; who had all the advantages imaginable of performing it; who flourished in the greatest magnificences of worldly pomp and power; who enjoyed an incredible affluence of all

Eccles. ii. 13, 15.

[h] Διπλοῦν ὁρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα.— [Menand. Sentent. Sing. p. 336. Ed. Meinek.]

Digitized by Google

riches; who tasted all varieties of most exquisite pleasure; whose heart was (by God's special gift, and by his own industrious care) enlarged with all kind of knowledge, (furnished with notions many as the sand upon the sea-shore,) above all that were before him; who had possessed and enjoyed all that fancy could conceive, or heart could wish, and had arrived to the top of secular happiness; yet even he with pathetical reiteration pronounces all to be *Vanity and vexation of spirit;* altogether unprofitable and unsatisfactory to the mind of man. And so therefore we may justly conclude them to be; so finishing the first grand advantage this present consideration affordeth us in order to that wisdom, to which we should apply our hearts.

SERM. XLI.

1 Kings iv. 29.

Eccles. i. 14.

I should proceed to gather other good fruits, which it is apt to produce, and contribute to the same purpose; but since my thoughts have taken so large scope upon that former head, so that I have already too much, I fear, exercised your patience, I shall only mention the rest. As this consideration doth, as we have seen, first, dispose us rightly to value these temporal goods, and moderate our affections about them; so it doth, secondly, in like manner, conduce to the right estimation of temporal evils; and thereby to the well tempering our passions in the resentment of them; to the begetting of patience and contentedness in our minds. Also, thirdly, it may help us to value, and excite us to regard those things, good or evil, which relate to our future state; being the things only of a permanent nature, and of an everlasting consequence to us. Fourthly, it

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLI.

will engage us to husband carefully, and well employ this short time of our present life: not to defer or procrastinate our endeavours to live well; not to be lazy and loitering in the dispatch of our only considerable business, relating to eternity; to embrace all opportunities, and improve all means, and follow the best compendiums of good practice leading to eternal bliss. Fifthly, it will be apt to confer much toward the begetting and preserving sincerity in our thoughts, words, and actions; causing us to decline all oblique designs upon present mean interests, or base regards to the opinions or affections of men; bearing single respects to our conscience and duty in our actions; teaching us to speak as we mean, and be what we would seem; to be in our hearts and in our closets, what we appear in our outward expressions and conversations with men. For considering, that within a very short time all the thoughts of our hearts shall be disclosed, and all the actions of our lives exposed to public view, (being strictly to be examined at the great bar of divine judgment before angels and men,) we cannot but perceive it to be the greatest folly in the world, for this short present time to disguise ourselves; to conceal our intentions, or smother our actions. What hath occurred, upon these important subjects, to my meditation, I must at present, in regard to your patience, omit. I shall close all with that good collect of our Church.

Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit

Digitized by Google

us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLII.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

SERM. XLII.

IN discoursing formerly upon these words, (expounded according to the most common and passable interpretation,) that which I chiefly observed was this: That the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a fit mean or rational instrument subservient to the bringing our hearts to wisdom[a]; that is, to the making us discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things, as according to the dictates of right reason are truly best for us.

I. The truth of which observation I largely declared from hence, that the said consideration disposeth us to judge rightly about those goods, (which ordinarily court and tempt us, viz. worldly glory and honour; riches, pleasure, knowledge; to which I might have added wit, strength, and beauty,) what their just worth and value is; and consequently to moderate our affections, our cares, our endeavours about them; for that, if all those goods be uncertain and transitory, there can be no

[a] *All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*—Job xiv. 14.

Digitized by Google

great reason to prize them much, or to affect them vehemently, or to spend much care and pains about them. SERM. XLII.

II. I shall next in the same scales weigh our temporal evils; and say, that also the consideration of our lives' brevity and frailty doth avail to the passing a true judgment of, and consequently to the governing our passions, and ordering our behaviour in respect to all those temporal evils, which either according to the law of our nature, or the fortuitous course of things, or the particular dispensation of Providence do befall us. Upon the declaration of which point I need not insist much, since what was before discoursed concerning the opposite goods doth plainly enough infer it; more immediately indeed in regard to the *mala damni*, or *privationis*, (the evils which consist only in the want or loss of temporal goods,) but sufficiently also, by a manifest parity of reason, in respect to the *mala sensus*, the real pains, crosses, and inconveniences that assail us in this life. For if worldly glory do hence appear to be no more than a transient blaze, a fading show, a hollow sound, a piece of theatrical pageantry, the want thereof cannot be very considerable to us. Obscurity of condition (living in a valley beneath that dangerous height, and deceitful lustre) cannot in reason be deemed a very sad or pitiful thing, which should displease or discompose us: if we may thence learn, that abundant wealth is rather a needless clog, or a perilous snare, than any great convenience to us, we cannot well esteem to be poor a great infelicity, or to undergo losses a grievous calamity; but rather a benefit to be free from the distractions that attend

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

it; to have little to keep for others, little to care for ourselves. If these present pleasures be discerned hence to be only wild fugitive dreams; out of which being soon roused we shall only find bitter regrets to abide; why should not the wanting opportunities of enjoying them be rather accounted a happy advantage, than any part of misery to us? If it seem, that the greatest perfection of curious knowledge, of what use or ornament soever, after it is hardly purchased, must soon be parted with; to be simple or ignorant will be no great matter of lamentation: as those will appear no solid goods, so these consequently must be only *Umbræ malorum*[b], *Phantasms*, or *shadows of evil*, rather than truly or substantially so; (evils created by fancy, and subsisting thereby; which reason should, and time will surely remove;) that in being impatient or disconsolate for them, we are but like children, that fret and wail for the want of petty toys. And for the more real or positive evils, such as violently assault nature, whose impressions no reason can so withstand, as to extinguish all distaste or afflictive sense of them; yet this consideration will aid to abate and assuage them; affording a certain hope and prospect of approaching redress. It is often seen at sea, that men (from unacquaintance with such agitations, or from brackish steams arising from the salt water) are heartily sick, and discover themselves to be so by apparently grievous symptoms; yet no man hardly there doth mind or pity them, because the malady is not supposed dangerous, and within a while will probably of

[b] Sen. [Ep. XCIX. 3.]

Digitized by Google

itself pass over; or that however the remedy is not far off; the sight of land, a taste of the fresh air will relieve them: it is near our case: we passing over this troublesome sea of life; from unexperience, joined with the tenderness of our constitution, we cannot well endure the changes and crosses of fortune; to be tossed up and down; to suck in the sharp vapours of penury, disgrace, sickness, and the like, doth beget a qualm in our stomachs; make us nauseate all things, and appear sorely distempered; yet is not our condition so dismal as it seems; we may grow hardier, and wear out our sense of affliction; however, the land is not far off, and by disembarking hence we shall suddenly be discharged of all our molestations. It is a common solace of grief, approved by wise men, *Si gravis, brevis est; si longus, levis*[c]; if it be very grievous and acute, it cannot continue long without intermission or respite; if it abide long, it is supportable[d]: intolerable pain is like lightning, it destroys us, or is itself instantly destroyed. However, death at length (which never is far off) will free us[e]; be we never so much tossed with storms of misfortune, that is a sure haven; be we persecuted with never so many enemies, that is a safe refuge; let what pains or diseases soever infest us, that is an assured

[c] [Cic. de Fin. II. 29, 95.]

[d] Θάρσει· πόνου γὰρ ἄκρον οὐκ ἔχει χρόνον —Æschyl. apud Plut. de Aud. Poet. sub finem. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 62. Ed. Steph.]

Τὸ μὲν ἀφόρητον, ἐξάγει· τὸ δὲ χρονίζον, φορητόν.—M. Ant. VII. §. 33.

Summi doloris intentio invenit finem. Nemo potest valde dolere et diu; sic nos amantissima nostri natura disposuit, ut dolorem aut tolerabilem, aut brevem faceret.—Sen. [Ep. LXXVIII. 7.]

[e] Dolore perculsi mortem imploramus, eamque unam, ut miseriarum malorumque terminum exoptamus.—Cic. Consolat.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

anodynon, an infallible remedy for them all; however we be wearied with the labours of the day, the night will come and ease us; the grave will become a bed of rest unto us. *Shall I die? I shall then cease to be sick*[f]; I shall be exempted from disgrace; I shall be enlarged from prison; I shall be no more pinched with want; no more tormented with pain. Death is a winter, that, as it withers the rose and lily, so it kills the nettle and thistle; as it stifles all worldly joy and pleasure, so it suppresses all care and grief; as it hushes the voice of mirth and melody, so it stills the clamours and the sighs of misery; as it defaces all the world's glory, so it covers all disgrace, wipes off all tears, silences all complaint, buries all disquiet and discontent. King Philip of Macedon once threatened the Spartans to vex them sorely, and bring them into great straits; but, answered they, can he hinder us from dying? that indeed is a way of evading which no enemy can obstruct, no tyrant can debar men from; they who can deprive of life, and its conveniences, cannot take away death from them[g]. There is a place, Job tells us, *Where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest: where the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor: the small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.* It is therefore but holding out a while, and a deliverance from the

Job iii. 17, 18, 19.

[f] Moriar? hoc dicis; desinam ægrotare posse, &c.—Sen. Ep. XXIV. [16.]

[g] Ἄδην δ' ἔχων βοηθόν, οὐ τρέμω σκιάς.—[Plut. consol. ad Apol. Opp. Tom. VI. p. 404. Ed. Reisk.]

Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest;
At nemo mortem.—

Sen. Trag. [Phœn. 152.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

worst this world can molest us with shall of its own accord arrive unto us; in the mean-time it is better that we at present owe the benefit of our comfort to reason, than afterward to time[h]; by rational consideration to work patience and contentment in ourselves; and to use the shortness of our life as an argument to sustain us in our affliction, than to find the end thereof only a natural and necessary means of our rescue from it. The contemplation of this cannot fail to yield something of courage and solace to us in the greatest pressures; these transient and shortlived evils, if we consider them as so, cannot appear such horrid bugbears, as much to affright or dismay us; if we remember how short they are, we cannot esteem them so great, or so intolerable[i]. There be, I must confess, divers more noble considerations, proper and available to cure discontent and impatience. The considering, that all these evils proceed from God's just will, and wise providence; unto which it is fit, and we upon all accounts are obliged, readily to submit; that they do ordinarily come from God's goodness and gracious design towards us; that they are medicines (although ungrateful, yet wholesome) administered by the Divine Wisdom to prevent, remove, or abate our distempers of soul, (to allay the tumours of pride, to cool the fevers of intemperate desire, to rouse us from the lethargy of sloth, to stop the gangrene of bad conscience;) that they are fatherly corrections, intended to reclaim us from sin, and

[h] Ὁ οὖν μέλλεις τῷ χρόνῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦτο τῷ λόγῳ χάρισαι. —Plut. Consol. ad Apol. Opp. Tom. I. p. 195. Ed. Steph.

[i] Omnia autem brevia, tolerabilia esse debent, etiam si magna sint.—Cic. Læl. ad fin.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

excite us to duty; that they serve as instruments or occasions to exercise, to try, to refine our virtue; to beget in us the hope, to qualify us for the reception of better rewards: such discourses, indeed, are of a better nature, and have a more excellent kind of efficacy; yet no fit help, no good art, no just weapon is to be quite neglected in the combat against our spiritual foes. A pebble-stone hath been sometimes found more convenient than a sword or a spear to slay a giant. Baser remedies (by reason of the patient's constitution, or circumstances) do sometime produce good effect, when others in their own nature more rich and potent want efficacy. And surely frequent reflections upon our mortality, and living under the sense of our lives' frailty, cannot but conduce somewhat to the begetting in us an indifferency of mind toward all these temporal occurrents; to extenuate both the goods and the evils we here meet with; consequently therefore to compose and calm our passions about them.

III. But I proceed to another use of that consideration we speak of, emergent from the former, but so as to improve it to higher purposes. For since it is useful to the diminishing our admiration of these worldly things, to the withdrawing our affections from them, to the slackening our endeavours about them; it will follow that it must conduce also to beget an esteem, a desire, a prosecution of things conducing to our future welfare; both by removing the obstacles of doing so, and by engaging us to consider the importance of those things in comparison with these. By removing obstacles, I say; for while our hearts are possessed

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

with regard and passion toward these present things, there can be no room left in them for respect and affection toward things future. It is in our soul as in the rest of nature; there can be no penetration of objects, as it were, in our hearts, nor any vacuity in them: our mind no more than our body can be in several places, or tend several ways, or abide in perfect rest; yet somewhere it will always be; somewhither it will always go; somewhat it will ever be doing. If we have a treasure here, (somewhat we greatly like and much confide in,) our hearts will be here with it; and if here, they cannot be otherwhere; they will be taken up, they will rest satisfied, they will not care to seek further. If we affect worldly glory, and delight in the applause of men, we shall not be so careful to please God, and seek his favour. If we admire and repose confidence in riches, it will make us neglectful of God, and distrustful of his providence: if our mind thirsts after, and sucks in greedily sensual pleasures, we shall not relish spiritual delights, attending the practice of virtue and piety, or arising from good conscience: adhering to, attending upon masters of so different, so opposite a quality is inconsistent; they cannot abide peaceably together, they cannot both rule in our narrow breasts; we shall love and hold to the one, hate and despise the other. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;* the love of the world, as the present guest, so occupies and fills the room, that it will not admit, cannot hold the love of God. But when the heart is discharged and emptied of these things; when we begin to despise them as base and vain;

Matt. vi. 21.

John v. 44; xii. 43.

Rom. viii. 5.

Matt. vi. 24.

1 John ii. 15.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

to distaste them as insipid and unsavoury; then naturally will succeed a desire after other things promising a more solid content; and desire will breed endeavour; and endeavour (furthered by God's assistance always ready to back it) will yield such a glimpse and taste of those things, as will so comfort and satisfy our minds, that thereby they will be drawn and engaged into a more earnest prosecution of them. When, I say, driving on ambitious projects, heaping up wealth, providing for the flesh, (by our reflecting on the shortness and frailty of our life,) become so insipid to us, that we find little appetite to them, or relish in them; our restless minds will begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, desiring some satisfaction thence: discerning these secular and carnal fruitions to be mere husks, (the proper food of swine,) we shall bethink ourselves of that better nourishment (of rational or spiritual comfort) which our Father's house doth afford to his children and servants. Being somewhat disentangled from the care of our farms and our traffics; from yoking our oxen, and being married to our present delights; we may be at leisure, and in disposition to comply with divine invitations to entertainments spiritual. Experiencing that our trade about these petty commodities turns to small account, and that in the end we shall be nothing richer thereby; reason will induce us, with the merchant in the Gospel, to sell all that we have (to forego our present interests and designs) for the purchasing that rich pearl of God's kingdom, which will yield so exceeding profit; the gain of present comfort to our conscience, and eternal happiness to our

Luke xv. 16.

Matt. xxii. 5.

Matt. xiii. 46.

Digitized by Google

souls. In fine, when we consider seriously, that *We have here no abiding city,* but are only *Sojourners and pilgrims upon earth;* that all our care and pain here do regard only an uncertain and transitory state; and will therefore suddenly, as to all fruit and benefit, be lost unto us; this will suggest unto us, with the good Patriarchs, Κρείττονος ὀρέγεσθαι πατρίδος, *To long after a better country;* a more assured and lasting state of life; where we may enjoy some certain and durable repose; to tend homeward, in our desires and hopes, toward those eternal mansions of joy and rest prepared for God's faithful servants in heaven. Thus will this consideration help toward the bringing us to inquire after and regard the things concerning our future state; and in the result will engage us to compare them with these present things, as to our concernment in them and the consequence of them to our advantage or damage, whence a right judgment and a congruous practice will naturally follow. There be four ways of comparing the things relating to this present life with those which respect our future state: comparing the goods of this with the goods of that; the evils of this with the evils of that; the goods of this with the evils of that; the evils of this with the goods of that. All these comparisons we may find often made in Scripture; in order to the informing our judgment about the respective value of both sorts; the present consideration intervening, as a standard to measure and try them by.

SERM. XLII.

Heb. xiii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 11.

Heb. xi. 16.

First, then; comparing the present goods with those which concern our future state, since the transitoriness and uncertainty of temporal goods

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

detract from their worth, and render them in great degree contemptible; but the durability and certainty of spiritual goods doth increase their rate, and make them exceedingly valuable; it is evident hence, that spiritual goods are infinitely to be preferred in our opinion, to be more willingly embraced, to be more zealously pursued, than temporal goods; that, in case of competition, when both cannot be enjoyed, we are in reason obliged readily to part with all these, rather than to forfeit our title unto, or hazard our hope of those. Thus in the Scripture it is often discoursed: *The world,* saith St John, *passeth away, and the desire thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* The world, and all that is desirable therein, is transient; but obedience to God's commandments is of an everlasting consequence; whence he infers, that we should not love the world; that is, not entertain such an affection thereto, as may any way prejudice the love of God, or hinder the obedience springing thence, or suitable thereto.

1 John ii. 17.

ver. 15.

All flesh is grass, saith St Peter, *and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever:* all worldly glory is frail and fading, but the word of God is eternally firm and permanent; that is, the good things by God promised to them, who faithfully serve him, shall infallibly be conferred on them to their everlasting benefit; whence it follows, that, as he exhorts, we are bound to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and hope to the end; to proceed and persist constantly in faithful obedience to God. *Charge those,* saith St Paul, *who are rich*

1 Pet. i. 24.

1 Pet. i. 13.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future; that they may attain everlasting life. Since, argues he, present riches are of uncertain and short continuance; but faith and obedience to God, exercised in our charity and mercy toward men, are a certain stock improvable to our eternal interest; therefore be not proud of, nor rely upon those, but regard especially, and employ yourselves upon these. Our Saviour himself doth often insist upon and inculcate this comparison: *Treasure not unto yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but treasure up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; Do not take care for your soul, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink; nor for your body, what ye shall put on; but seek first the kingdom of God; Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth to eternal life; Sell your substance, and give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old; an indefectible treasure, θησαυρὸν ἀνέκλειπτον, in the heavens.* Thus doth the holy Scripture, setting forth the uncertainty and transitoriness of the present, the certainty and permanency of future goods, declare the excellency of these above those; advising thereupon, with highest reason, that we willingly reject those (in real effect, if need be, however always in ready disposition of mind) in order to the procuring or securing of these. It

1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

Matt. vi. 19, 20.

vi. 25.

John vi. 27.

Luke xii. 33.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

also, for our example and encouragement, commends to us the wisdom and virtue of those persons, who have effectually practised this duty: of
Heb. xi. 10. Abraham, our father, who, in expectation of that well-founded city made and built by God, did readily desert his country and kindred, with all
xi. 23, 24, 26. present accommodations of life: of Moses, who disregarded the splendours and delights of a great court; rejected the alliance of a great princess, and *Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*, in respect to the μισθαποδοσία, that future distribution of reward; a share wherein shall assuredly fall to them, who above all other considerations regard the performance of their duty to God: of
Matt. xix. 27. Luke xviii. 28. the Apostles, who forsook all, parents, brethren, lands, houses, trades, receipts of custom, to follow Christ; him at present poor, and naked of all secular honour, power, wealth, and delight; in hope only to receive from him divine benefits, and
Luke x. 39, 42. future preferments in his kingdom: of Mary, who neglecting present affairs, and seating herself at Jesus his feet, attending to his discipline, is commended for her wisdom, in minding *The only necessary thing; in choosing the better part, which*
Phil. iii. 7, 8. *could never be taken from her:* of St Paul, who *Accounted all his gains* (all his worldly interests and privileges) *to be damage, to be dung in respect to Christ, and the excellent knowledge of him*, with the benefits thence accruing to him. On the contrary, there we have Esau condemned and stigma-
Heb. xii. 16. tized for a profane and a vain person, who, Ἀντὶ βρώσεως μιᾶς, *For one little eatingbout, one mess of pottage*, (for a little present satisfaction of sense, or for the sustenance of this frail life,) did withgo

Digitized by Google

his birthright, that emblem of spiritual blessings and privileges. We have, again, represented to us that unhappy young gentleman; who, though he had good qualities, rendering him amiable even to our Saviour, and had been trained up in the observance of God's commandments, yet not being content to part with his large possessions, in lieu of the treasure by Christ offered in heaven, was reputed deficient; could find no acceptance with God, nor admission into his kingdom; for a petty temporal commodity forfeiting an infinite eternal advantage. For, saith our Saviour, *He that loveth father or mother above me; he that doth not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea his own life, for me and the Gospel, is not worthy of me, nor can be my disciple.* He that in his esteem or affection doth prefer any temporal advantages before the benefits tendered by our Saviour, (yea doth not in comparison despise, renounce, and reject his dearest contents of life, and the very capacity of enjoying them, his life itself,) doth not deserve to be reckoned among the disciples of Christ; to be so much as a pretender to eternal joy, or a candidate of immortality. Our Saviour rejects all such unwise and perverse traders, who will not exchange brittle glass for solid gold; counterfeit glistering stones for genuine most precious jewels; a garland of fading flowers for an incorruptible crown of glory; a small temporary pension for a vastly rich freehold; *An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.* Thus doth the holy Scripture teach us to compare these sorts of good things;

SERM. XLII.

Mark x. 17.

Matt. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26. Mark x. 29.

1 Pet. i. 4.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

And secondly, so also doth it to compare the evils of both states; for that seeing, as the soon ceasing of temporal mischiefs should (in reasonable proceeding) diminish the fear of them, and mitigate the grief for them; so the incessant continuance of spiritual evils doth, according to just estimation, render them hugely grievous and formidable; it is plain, that we should much more dislike, abominate, and shun spiritual evils, than temporal; that we should make no question rather to endure these paroxysms of momentary pain, than incur those chronical, and indeed incurable, maladies; that we should run willingly into these shallow plashes of present inconvenience, rather than plunge ourselves into those unfathomable depths of eternal misery. There is, I suppose, no man, who would not account it a very great calamity (such as hardly greater could befall him here) to have his right eye plucked out, and his right hand cut off, and his foot taken from him; to be deformed and maimed, so that he can do nothing, or stir any whither: yet our Lord represents these to us as inconsiderable evils, yea as things very eligible and advantageous in comparison of those mischiefs, which the voluntary not embracing them, in case we cannot otherwise than by so doing avoid sin, will bring on us:

Matt. v. 29. Συμφέρει σοι, *It is,* saith he, *profitable for thee that one of thy members be lost, rather than that thy*

xviii. 8. *whole body be cast into hell:* Καλόν σοι ἐστί, *It is good, it is excellent for thee to enter into life lame and maimed, and one-eyed, rather than having two hands, and two feet, and two eyes,* (in all integrity and beauty of this temporal, or corporal state,) *to be cast into eternal fire.* To be banished from one's

Digitized by Google

native soil, secluded from all comforts of friendly acquaintance, divested irrecoverably of great estate and dignity; becoming a vagrant and a servant in vile employment, in a strange country, every man would be apt to deem a wretched condition: yet Moses, we see, freely chose it, rather than by enjoying unlawful pleasures at home, in Pharaoh's court, to incur God's displeasure and vengeance: Μᾶλλον ἑλόμενος συγκακουχεῖσθαι, *Choosing rather to undergo evil together with God's people, than to have* πρόσκαιρον ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, *a temporary fruition of sinful delight,* dangerous to the welfare of his soul. Death is commonly esteemed the most extreme and terrible of evils incident to man; yet our Saviour bids us not to regard or fear it, in comparison of that deadly ruin, which we adventure on by offending God: *I say unto you, my friends,* saith he, (he intended it for the most friendly advice,) *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have nothing further to do: but I will shew you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell,* to cast both body and soul into hell, and destroy them therein; *yea, I say unto you,* (so he inculcates and impresses it upon them,) *Fear him.*

SERM. XLII.

Heb. xi. 25.

Luke xii. 4. Matt. x. 28.

But thirdly, considering the good things of this life together with the evils of that which is to come; since enjoying these goods in comparison with enduring those evils, is but rejoicing for a moment in respect of mourning to eternity; if upon the seeming sweetness of these enjoyments to our carnal appetite be consequent a remediless distempering of our soul; so that what tastes like honey proves gall in the digestion, gripes our

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

bowels, gnaws our heart, and stings our conscience for ever; if present mirth and jollity have a tendency to that dreadful weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth threatened in the Gospel; if, for the praise and favour of a few giddy men here, we venture eternal shame and confusion before God and angels and all good men hereafter; if, for attaining or preserving a small stock of uncertain riches in this world, we shall reduce ourselves into a state of most uncomfortable nakedness and penury in the other; it is clear as the sun that we are downright fools and madmen, if we do not upon these accounts rather willingly reject all these good things, than hazard incurring any of those evils; for, saith truth itself, *What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχήν, and be endamaged as to his soul,* or lose his soul as a mulct? It is a very disadvantageous bargain, for all the conveniences this world can afford to be deprived of the comforts of our immortal state. But,

Mark viii. 36. Luke ix. 25.

Lastly, comparing the evils of this life with the benefits of the future; since the worst tempests of this life will be soon blown over, the bitterest crosses must expire (if not before, however) with our breath; but the good things of the future state are immutable and perpetual; it is in evident consequence most reasonable, that we freely, if need be, undertake, and patiently endure these for the sake of those, that in hope of that *Incorruptible inheritance, laid up for us in heaven,* we not only support and comfort ourselves, but even rejoice and exult in all the afflictions by God's wise and just dispensation imposed on us here; as they in

1 Pet. i. 4.

Digitized by Google

St Peter, wherein, saith he, *Ye greatly rejoice,* SERM. XLII.
ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, (or *exult,*) *being for a little while,* ὀλίγον ἄρτι, *as in heaviness through manifold afflictions* or *trials. Accounting it all joy,* saith St James, *when ye fall into divers temptations,* πειρασμοῖς, (that is, *afflictions* or *trials,*) *knowing that the trial of your faith perfecteth patience;* that is, seeing the sufferance of these present evils conduceth to the furtherance of your spiritual and eternal welfare. And, *We glory in tribulation,* saith St Paul, rendering the same account, because it tended to their soul's advantage. St Paul, than whom no man perhaps ever more deeply tasted of the cup of affliction, and that tempered with all the most bitter ingredients which this world can produce; whose life was spent in continual agitation and unsettledness, in all hardships of travel and labour and care, in extreme sufferance of all pains both of body and mind; in all imaginable dangers and difficulties and distresses, that nature exposes man unto, or human malice can bring upon him; in all wants of natural comfort, (food, sleep, shelter, liberty, health;) in all kinds of disgrace and contumely; as you may see in those large inventories of his sufferings, registered by himself, in the 6th and 11th chapters of his second Epistle to the Corinthians; yet all this, considering the good things he expected afterward to enjoy, he accounted very slight and tolerable: *For,* saith he, *our lightness of affliction, that is for a little while here,* τὸ γὰρ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως, *worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen: for the things which are seen are*

1 Pet. i. 6.
James i. 2.
Rom. v. 3.
2 Cor. iv. 17; v. 1.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle (of this unsteady transitory abode) *is dissolved, we are to have a tabernacle from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Rom. viii. 18. *I reckon*, saith he again, that is, having made a due comparison and computation, I find, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy* (that is, are not considerable, come under no rate or proportion) *in respect of the glory which shall be revealed* (or *openly conferred*) *upon us.* The like opinion had those faithful Christians, in the Epistle

Heb. x. 33, 34. to the Hebrews, of whom it is said, that, *Being exposed to public scorn as in a theatre, θεατριζόμενοι, with reproaches and afflictions, they did with gladness accept the spoiling, ἁρπαγήν,* (or *rapine*) *of their goods; knowing that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance.* But the principal example (most obliging our imitation) of this wise choice, is that of our Lord himself; who, in contemplation of the future great satisfaction and reward of patient submission to the divine will, did willingly undergo the greatest of temporal

Heb. xii. 2. sorrows and ignominies; *Who*, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, propounding his example to us, *for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.*

Thus immediately, or by an easy inference, doth the consideration of this life's shortness and uncertainty confer to that main part of wisdom, rightly to value the things about which we are conversant; disposing us consequently to moderate our affections, and rightly to guide our actions

Digitized by Google

about them; fitting us therefore for the performance of those duties so often enjoined us; of not caring for, nor trusting in, not minding (unduly that is, and immoderately) things below; of dying to this world, and taking up our cross, or contentedly suffering, in submission to God's will, all loss and inconvenience; as also to the placing our meditation and care, our love and desire, our hope and confidence, our joy and satisfaction, our most earnest pains and endeavours, upon things divine, spiritual, and eternal. SERM. XLII.

IV. I proceed to another general benefit of that general consideration; which is, that it may engage us to a good improvement of our time; the doing which is a very considerable piece of wisdom. For if time be, as Theophrastus called it truly, *A thing of most precious value*[k], (or *expense*,) as it were a great folly to lavish it away unprofitably; so to be frugal thereof, and careful to lay it out for the best advantage, especially every man having so little store thereof, must be a special point of prudence. *To be covetous of time* (Seneca tells us) *is a commendable avarice*[l]; it being necessary for the accomplishment of any worthy enterprise; there being nothing excellent, that can soon or easily be effected. Surely he that hath much and great business to dispatch, and but a little time allowed for it, is concerned to husband it well; not to lose it wholly in idleness; not to trifle it away in unnecessary divertisements; not to put himself upon other impertinent affairs; above all, not to

[k] [Συνεχές τε ἔλεγε πολυτελὲς ἀνάλωμα εἶναι τὸν χρόνον.—Diog. Laer. (vit. Theoph.) v. 2. 10.]

[l] Cujus (temporis) unius honesta avaritia est.—[De Brev. Vit. cap. III. 2.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

create obstacles to himself, by pursuing matters of a tendency quite contrary to the success of his main undertakings. It is our case; we are obliged here to negotiate in business of infinite price and consequence to us; no less than the salvation of our souls, and eternal happiness: and we see, that our time to drive it on and bring it to a happy issue is very scant and short; short in itself, and very short in respect to the nature of those affairs; the great variety and the great difficulty of them. The great father of physicians did quicken the students of that faculty to diligence, by admonishing them (in the first place, setting it in the front of his famous aphorisms) that *Life is short, and art is long*[m]. And how much more so is the art of living well, (that most excellent and most necessary art: for indeed virtue is not a gift of nature, but a work of art[n]; an effect of labour and study:) this, I say, most needful and useful art of living virtuously and piously; this art of spiritual physic, (of preserving and recovering our soul's health,) how much longer is it? how many rules are to be learnt? how many precepts to be observed in order thereto? We are bound to furnish our minds with needful knowledge of God's will and our duty; we are to bend our unwilling wills to a ready compliance with them; we are to adorn our souls with dispositions suitable to the future state, (such as may qualify us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed spirits above;) it is incumbent on us to mortify corrupt desires, to restrain

[m] [Hippocrat. Aphor. I. Opp. Tom. III. p. 706. Ed. Kühn.]

[n] Non enim dat natura virtutem; ars est bonum fieri.—Sen. [Ep. XC. 44.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

inordinate passions, to subdue natural propensities, to extirpate vicious habits; in order to the effecting these things, to use all fit means; devotion toward God, study of his law, reflection upon our actions, with all such spiritual instruments; the performing which duties, as it doth require great care and pains, so it needs much time; all this is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; a few spare minutes will not suffice to accomplish it. Natural inclination, that wild beast within us, will not so presently be tamed, and made tractable by us. Ill habits cannot be removed without much exercise and attendance; as they were begot, so they must be destroyed, by a constant succession, and frequency of acts°. Fleshly lust is not to be killed with a stab or two; it will fight stoutly, and rebel often, and hold out long, before with our utmost endeavour we can obtain an entire victory over it. No virtue is acquired in an instant, but by degrees, step by step; from the seeds of right instruction and good resolution it springs up, and grows forward by a continual progress of customary practice; it is a child of patience, a fruit of perseverance, that Ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *Enduring in doing well*, St Paul speaks of, and consequently a work of time; for enduring implies a good space of time. Having therefore so much to do, and of so great concernment, and so little a portion of time for it, it behoves us to be careful in the improvement of what time is allowed us; to embrace all opportunities and advantages offered; to go the nearest way, to use the best compendiums in the transaction of our business; not to be slothful and

Rom. ii. 7.

° Τί φθείρει τὸ ἦθος; ἐναντίον ἦθος.—Epict. [Diss. i. 17.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

negligent, but active and intent about it; (for as time is diminished, and in part lost by sloth or slackness; so it is enlarged, and, as it were, multiplied by industry; my day is two in respect of his, who doeth but half my work:) not, also, to consume our time in fruitless pastimes, and curious entertainments of fancy; being idly busy about impertinences and trifles; (we call it sport, but it is a serious damage to us;) not to immerse ourselves in multiplicities of needless care about secular matters, which may distract us, and bereave us of fit leisure for our great employment; that which

Luke x. 41. our Saviour calls Τυρβάζεσθαι περὶ πολλά, *To keep a great deal of do and stir* (to be jumbled about as it were, and confounded) *about many things;* and, Περισπᾶσθαι περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν, *To be distracted and perplexed about much cumbersome service;*

2 Tim. ii. 4. which St Paul calls Ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *To be implicated and entangled,* as in a net, *with the negotiations of this present life;* so that we shall not be expedite, or free to bestir ourselves about our more weighty affairs. The spending much time about those things doth steal it from these; yea doth more than so, by discomposing our minds, so that we cannot well employ what time remains upon our spiritual concernments. But especially we should not prostitute our time upon vicious projects and practices; doing which is not only a prodigality of the present time, but an abridgment of the future; it not only doth not promote or set forward our business, but brings it backward, and makes us more work than we had before; it is a going in a way directly contrary to our journey's end. The

Digitized by Google

Scripture aptly resembles our life to a wayfaring, a condition of travel and pilgrimage: now he that hath a long journey to make, and but a little time of day to pass it in, must in reason strive to set out soon, and then to make good speed; must proceed on directly, making no stops or deflections, (not calling in at every sign that invites him, not standing to gaze at every object seeming new or strange to him; not staying to talk with every passenger that meets him; but rather avoiding all occasions of diversion and delay,) lest he be surprised by the night, be left to wander in the dark, be excluded finally from the place whither he tends: so must we, in our course toward heaven and happiness, take care that we set out soon, (procrastinating no time, but beginning instantly to insist in the ways of piety and virtue,) then proceed on speedily, and persist constantly; nowhere staying or loitering, shunning all impediments and avocations from our progress, lest we never arrive near, or come too late unto the gate of heaven. St Peter tells us, that the end of all things doth approach, and thereupon advises us *To be sober, and to watch unto prayer;* for, that the less our time is, the more intent and industrious it concerns us to be. And St Paul enjoins us *To redeem the time, because the days are evil;* that is, since we can enjoy no true quiet or comfort here, we should improve our time to the best advantage for the future: he might have also adjoined, with the patriarch Jacob, the paucity of the days to their badness; because *The days of our life are few and evil,* let us redeem the time; *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and*

1 Pet. iv. 7.

Eph. v. 16.

Gen. xlvii. 9.

Job xiv. 1.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

full of trouble: so few indeed they are, that it is fit we should lose none of them, but use them all in preparation toward that great change we are to make: that fatal passage out of this strait time into that boundless eternity. So, it seems, we have Job's example of doing; *All the days,* says he, *of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.* I end this point with that so comprehensive warning of our Saviour: *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to escape—and to stand before the Son of man.*

Job xiv. 14.

Luke xxi. 34, 36.

V. I shall adjoin but one use more, to which this consideration may be subservient, which is, that it may help to beget and maintain in us (that which is the very heart and soul of all goodness) sincerity: sincerity in all kinds, in our thoughts, words, and actions. To keep us from harbouring in our breasts such thoughts, as we would be afraid or ashamed to own; from speaking otherwise than we mean, than we intend to do, than we are ready any where openly to avow; from endeavouring to seem what we are not; from being one thing in our expressions and conversations with men; another in our hearts, or in our closets: from acting with oblique respects to private interests or passions, to human favour or censure; (in matters, I mean, where duty doth intervene, and where pure conscience ought to guide and govern us;) from making professions and ostentations, (void of substance, of truth, of knowledge,

Digitized by Google

of good purpose,) great semblances of peculiar sanctimony, integrity, scrupulosity, spirituality, refinedness, like those Pharisees so often therefore taxed in the Gospel; as also from palliating, as those men did, designs of ambition, avarice, envy, animosity, revenge, perverse humour, with pretences of zeal and conscience. We should indeed strive to be good (and that in all real strictness, aiming at utmost perfection) in outward act and appearance, as well as in heart and reality, for the glory of God and example of men, (*Providing things honest in the sight of all men;*) but we must not shine with a false lustre, nor care to seem better than we are, nor intend to serve ourselves in seeming to serve God; bartering spiritual commodities for our own glory or gain. For since the day approaches when *God will judge* (*τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*) *the things men do so studiously conceal;* when *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil;* since *We must all appear* (or rather be all made apparent, be manifested and discovered[p]) *at the tribunal of Christ:* since *There is nothing covered, which shall not be revealed, nor hid, that shall not be known; so that whatever is spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the housetops:* since at length, and that within a very short time, (no man knows how soon,) the whispers of every mouth (the closest murmurs of detraction, slander, and sycophantry) shall become audible to every ear; the abstrusest thoughts of all hearts (the closest malice and envy) shall be

Rom. xii. 17. Rom. ii. 16. Eccles. xii. 14. 2 Cor. v. 10. Luke xii. 2, 3.

[p] Οὐ γὰρ παραστῆναι ἡμᾶς ἁπλῶς δεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ φανερωθῆναι. —Chrys. [in 2 Cor. Orat. x. Opp. Tom. III. p. 606.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

disclosed in the most public theatre before innumerable spectators; the truth of all pretences shall be thoroughly examined; the just merit of every person and every cause shall with a most exact scrutiny be scanned openly in the face of all the world; to what purpose can it be to juggle and baffle for a time; for a few days (perhaps for a few minutes) to abuse or to amuse those about us with crafty dissimulation or deceit? Is it worth the pains to devise plausible shifts, which shall instantly, we know, be detected and defeated; to bedaub foul designs with a fair varnish, which death will presently wipe off; to be dark and cloudy in our proceedings, whenas a clear day (that will certainly dispel all darkness and scatter all mists) is breaking in upon us; to make vizors for our faces, and cloaks for our actions, whenas we must very shortly be exposed, perfectly naked and undisguised, in our true colours, to the general view of angels and men? Heaven sees at present what we think and do, and our conscience cannot be wholly ignorant or insensible; nor can earth itself be long unacquainted therewith. Is it not much better, and more easy (since it requires no pains or study) to act ourselves, than to accommodate ourselves to other unbeseeming and undue parts; to be upright in our intentions, consistent in our discourses, plain in our dealings, following the single and uniform guidance of our reason and conscience, than to shuffle and shift, wandering after the various, uncertain, and inconstant opinions or humours of men? What matter is it, what clothes we wear, what garb we appear in, during this posture of travel and sojourning here; what for

Digitized by Google

the present we go for; how men esteem us, what they think of our actions? St Paul at least did not much stand upon it; for, *With me*, said he, *it is a very small thing* (ἐλάχιστον, the least thing that can come under consideration) *to be judged of you, or of human day*, (that is, of this present, transitory, fallible, reversible judgment of men). If we mean well and do righteously, our conscience will at present satisfy us, and the divine (unerring and impartial) sentence will hereafter acquit us; no unjust or uncharitable censure shall prejudice us: if we entertain base designs, and deal unrighteously, as our conscience will accuse and vex us here, so God will shortly condemn and punish us; neither shall the most favourable conceit of men stand us in stead: *Every man's work shall become manifest, for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire* (that is, a severe and strict inquiry) *shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.* I cannot insist more on this point; I shall only say, that, considering the brevity and uncertainty of our present state, the greatest simplicity may justly be deemed the truest wisdom; that who deceives others, doth cozen himself most; that the deepest policy, used to compass or to conceal bad designs, will in the end appear the most downright folly.

1 Cor. iv. 3.

1 Cor. iii. 13.

I might add to the precedent discourses, that philosophy itself hath commended this consideration as a proper and powerful instrument of virtue, reckoning the practice thereof a main part of wisdom[q]; the greatest proficient therein in

[q] Τοῦτο ἔχει ἡ τελειότης τοῦ ἤθους, τὸ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν ὡς τελευταίαν διεξάγειν.—M. Ant. VII. [§ 69.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLII.

common esteem, Socrates, having defined philosophy, or the study of wisdom, to be nothing else but Μελέτη θανάτου, *The study of death*[r]; intimating also, (in Plato's Phædon,) that this study, the meditation of death, and preparation of his mind to leave this world, had been the constant and chief employment of his life: that likewise, according to experience, nothing more avails to render the minds of men sober and well composed, than such spectacles of mortality, as do impress this consideration upon them. For whom doth not the sight of a coffin, or of a grave gaping to receive a friend, perhaps, or an ancient acquaintance; however, a man in nature and state altogether like ourselves; of the mournful looks and habits, of all the sad pomps and solemnities attending man unto his long home, by minding him of his own frail condition, affect with some serious, some honest, some wise thoughts? And if we be reasonable men, we may every day supply the need of such occasions, by representing to ourselves the necessity of our soon returning to the dust; dressing in thought our own hearses, and celebrating our own funerals; by living under the continual apprehension and sense of our transitory and uncertain condition; dying daily, or becoming already dead unto this world. The doing which effectually being the gift of God, and an especial work of his grace, let us of him humbly implore it, saying after the holy Prophet, *Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Amen.

[r] [Plat. Phæd. 81 A.]

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLIII.

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM CXIX. 60.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

SERM. XLIII.

THIS Psalm (no less excellent in virtue than large in bulk) containeth manifold reflections upon the nature, the properties, the adjuncts and effects of God's law; many sprightly ejaculations about it, (conceived in different forms of speech; some in way of petition, some of thanksgiving, some of resolution, some of assertion or aphorism;) many useful directions, many zealous exhortations to the observance of it; the which are not ranged in any strict order, but (like a variety of fair flowers and wholesome herbs in a wide field) do with a grateful confusion lie dispersed, as they freely did spring up in the heart, or were suggested by the devout spirit of him who indited the Psalm; whence no coherence of sentences being designed, we may consider any one of them absolutely, or singly by itself.

Among them, that which I have picked out for the subject of my discourse, implieth an excellent rule of practice, authorized by the Psalmist's example: it is propounded in way of devotion or immediate address to God; unto whose infallible

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

knowledge his conscience maketh an appeal concerning his practice; not as boasting thereof, but as praising God for it, unto whose gracious instruction and succour he frequently doth ascribe all his performances: but the manner of propounding I shall not insist upon; the rule itself is, that speedily, without any procrastination or delay, we should apply ourselves to the observance of God's commandments; the practice of which rule it shall be my endeavour to recommend and press.

It is a common practice of men that are engaged in bad courses, which their own conscience discerneth and disapproveth, to adjourn the reformation of their lives to a further time, so indulging themselves in the present commission of sin, that yet they would seem to purpose and promise themselves hereafter to repent and take up[a]; few resolve to persist finally in an evil way, or despair of being one day reclaimed; but immediately and effectually to set upon it, many deem unseasonable or needless; it will, they presume, be soon enough to begin to-morrow, or next day, a month or a year hence, when they shall find more commodious opportunity, or shall prove better disposed thereto: in the meantime with Solomon's sluggard, *Yet*, say they, *a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands:* let us but neglect this duty, let us but satisfy this appetite, let us but enjoy this bout of pleasure; hereafter, God willing, we mean to be more careful, we hope that we shall become more sober: so, like

Prov. vi. 10.

[a] Recognosce singulos, considera universos; nullius non vita spectat in crastinum....Non enim vivunt, sed victuri sunt.—Sen. Ep. XLV. [12.]

Victuros agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam.—
Manil. [Astronom. IV. 5.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

bad debtors, when our conscience dunneth us, we always mean, we always promise to pay; if she will stay a while, she shall, we tell her, be satisfied; or, like vain spendthrifts, we see our estate fly, yet presume that it will hold out, and at length we shall reserve enough for our use. Εἰς ἄυριον τὰ σπουδαῖα, *Let serious business stay till the morrow*[b], was a saying that cost dear to him who said it; yet we in our greatest concerns follow him.

But how fallacious, how dangerous, and how mischievous this manner of proceeding is; how much better and more advisable it is, after the example propounded in our text, speedily to betake ourselves unto the discharge of our debt and duty to God, the following considerations will plainly declare.

1 We may consider, that the observance of God's commandments (an observance of them proceeding from an habitual disposition of mind, in a constant tenor of practice) is our indispensable duty, our main concernment, our only way to happiness; the necessary condition of our attaining salvation; that alone which can procure God's love and favour toward us; that unto which all real blessings here, and all bliss hereafter, are inseparably annexed: *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man;* (the whole duty, the whole design, the whole perfection, the sum of our wisdom, and our happiness). *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright:* Eccles. xii. 13. Matt. xix. 27. Ps. xi. 7. Prov. xv. 9.

[b] Plut. in Pelop. [Opp. Tom. IV. p. 516, Ed. Steph.] Non est, crede mihi, sapientis dicere, Vivam.— Mart. I. 16. [11.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

God will render to every man according to his works: these are oracles indubitably clear, and infallibly certain; these are immovable terms of justice between God and man, which never will, never can be relaxed; being grounded on the immutable nature of God, and eternal reason of things: if God had not decreed, if he had not said these things, they would yet assuredly be true; for it is a foul contradiction to reason, that a man ever should please God without obeying him; it is a gross absurdity in nature, that a man should be happy without being good; wherefore all the wit in the world cannot devise a way, all the authority upon earth (yea, I dare say, even in heaven itself) cannot establish a condition, beside faithful observance of God's law, that can save, or make us happy: from it there can be no valid dispensation, without it there can be no effectual absolution, for it there can be no acceptable commutation; nor, in defect thereof, will any faith, any profession, any trick or pretence whatever, avail or signify anything: whatever expedient to supply its room superstition, mistake, craft, or presumption may recommend, we shall, relying thereon, be certainly deluded. If therefore, we mean to be saved, (and are we so wild as not to mean it?) if we do not renounce felicity, (and do we not then renounce our wits?) to become virtuous, to proceed in a course of obedience, is a work that necessarily must be performed: and why then should we not instantly undertake it? wherefore do we demur or stick at it? how can we at all rest quiet, while an affair of so vast importance lieth upon our hands, or until our mind be freed of all uncertainty and suspense about it? Were a

Rom. ii. 6. Matt. v. 18. Luke xvi. 17. Ps. cxix. 15.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

probable way suggested to us of acquiring great wealth, honour, or pleasure, should we not quickly run about it? could we contentedly sleep, till we had brought the business to a sure or hopeful issue? and why with less expedition or urgency should we pursue the certain means of our present security and comfort, of our final salvation and happiness? In doing so, are we not strangely inconsistent with ourselves?

Again, disobedience is the certain road to perdition; that which involveth us in guilt and condemnation, that which provoketh God's wrath and hatred against us, that which assuredly will throw us into a state of eternal sorrow and wretchedness: *The foolish shall not stand in God's sight;* Ps. v. 5. *he hateth all the workers of iniquity: If ye do not* Luke xiii. 3. *repent, ye shall perish: The wicked shall be turned* Ps. ix. 17. *into hell, and all the people that forget God: The* 1 Cor. vi. 9. *unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God; The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment:* Matt. xxv. 46. vii. 21. these are denunciations no less sure than severe, from that mouth, which is never opened in vain; from the execution whereof there can be no shelter or refuge. And what wise man, what man in his right senses, would for one minute stand obnoxious to them? Who, that anywise tendereth his own welfare, would move one step forward in so perilous and destructive a course? the further in which he proceedeth, the more he discosteth from happiness, the nearer he approacheth to ruin.

In other cases common sense prompteth men to proceed otherwise; for who, having rendered one his enemy that far overmatcheth him, and at whose mercy he standeth, will not instantly sue to

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

be reconciled? Who, being seized by a pernicious disease, will not haste to seek a cure? Who, being fallen into the jaws of a terrible danger, will not nimbly leap out thence? And such plainly is our case: while we persist in sin, we live in enmity and defiance with the Almighty, who can at his pleasure crush us; we lie under a fatal plague, which, if we do not seasonably repent, will certainly destroy us; we incur the most dreadful of all hazards, abiding in the confines of death and destruction; God frowning at us, guilt holding us, hell gaping for us: every sinner is, according to the Wise Man's expression, *As he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.* And he that is in such a case, is he not mad or senseless, if he will not forthwith labour to swim out thence, or make all speed to get down into a safer place? Can any man with comfort lodge in a condition so dismally ticklish?

Prov. xxiii. 34.

2 We may consider, that, in order to our final welfare, we have much work to despatch, the which requireth as earnest care and painful industry, so a competent long time; which, if we do not presently fall on, may be wanting, and thence our work be left undone, or imperfect. To conquer and correct bad inclinations, to render our sensual appetites obsequious to reason, to compose our passions into a right and steady order, to cleanse our souls from vanity, from perverseness, from sloth, from all vicious distempers, and in their room to implant firm habits of virtue; to get a clear knowledge of our duty, with a ready disposition to perform it; in fine, to season our minds with holy affections, qualifying us for the presence of God,

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

and conversation with the blessed spirits above; these are things that must be done, but cannot be done in a trice; it is not *dictum factum,* as soon done as said; but Ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *A patient continuance in well-doing,* is needful to achieve it; for it no time can be redundant; the longest life can hardly be sufficient: *Art is long, and life is short,* may be an aphorism in divinity as well as in physic; the art of living well, of preserving our soul's health, and curing its distempers, requireth no less time to compass it than any other art or science. Rom. i. 7.

Virtue is not a mushroom, that springeth up of itself in one night when we are asleep, or regard it not[c]; but a delicate plant, that groweth slowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to mature it, in our untoward soil, in this world's unkindly weather: happiness is a thing too precious to be purchased at an easy rate; heaven is too high to be come at without much climbing; the crown of bliss is a prize too noble to be won without a long and a tough conflict. Neither is vice a spirit that will be conjured down by a charm, or with a *presto* driven away; it is not an adversary that can be knocked down at a blow, or despatched with a stab. Whoever shall pretend, that, at any time, easily, with a celerity, by a kind of legerdemain, or by any mysterious knack, a man may be settled in virtue, or converted from vice, common experience abundantly will confute him[d]; which sheweth, that a habit otherwise

[c] Οὐ καθεύδουσιν ἡμῖν χορηγεῖ βοήθειαν ὁ Θεὸς, ἀλλὰ πονουμένοις.—Chrys. in Ep. Orat. XXI. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 877.]

[d] O quam istud parvum putant, quibus tam facile videtur!—Quint. XII. [2. 3.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

(setting miracles aside) cannot be produced or destroyed, than by a constant exercise of acts suitable or opposite thereto; and that such acts cannot be exercised without voiding all impediments, and framing all principles of action, (such as temper of body, judgment of mind, influence of custom,) to a compliance; that who by temper is peevish or choleric, cannot, without mastering that temper, become patient or meek; that who from vain opinions is proud, cannot, without considering away those opinions, prove humble; that who by custom is grown intemperate, cannot, without weaning himself from that custom, come to be sober; that who, from the concurrence of a sorry nature, fond conceits, mean breeding, and scurvy usage, is covetous, cannot, without draining all those sources of his fault, be turned into liberal. The change of our mind is one of the greatest alterations in nature, which cannot be compassed in any way, or within any time we please; but it must proceed on leisurely and regularly, in such order, by such steps, as the nature of things doth permit; it must be wrought by a resolute and laborious perseverance; by a watchful application of mind in voiding prejudices, in waiting for advantages, in attending to all we do; by forcible wresting our nature from its bent, and swimming against the current of impetuous desires; by a patient disentangling ourselves from practices most agreeable and familiar to us; by a wary fencing with temptations, by long struggling with manifold oppositions and difficulties; whence the holy scripture termeth our practice a warfare, wherein we are to fight many a bloody battle with most

Digitized by Google

redoubtable foes; a combat, which must be managed with our best skill and utmost might: a race, which we must pass through with incessant activity and swiftness.

If therefore we mean to be good or to be happy, it behoveth us to lose no time; to be presently up at our great task; to snatch all occasions, to embrace all means incident of reforming our hearts and lives. As those, who have a long journey to go, do take care to set out early, and in their way make good speed, lest the night overtake them before they reach their home[e]; so it being a great way from hence to heaven, seeing we must pass over so many obstacles, through so many paths of duty, before we arrive thither, it is expedient to set forward as soon as can be, and to proceed with all expedition; the longer we stay, the more time we shall need, and the less we shall have.

3 We may consider, that no future time which we can fix upon will be more convenient than the present is for our reformation. Let us pitch on what time we please, we shall be as unwilling and unfit to begin as we are now; we shall find in ourselves the same indispositions, the same averseness, or the same listlessness toward it, as now: there will occur the like hardships to deter us, and the like pleasures to allure us from our duty; objects will then be as present, and will strike as smartly upon our senses; the case will appear just the same, and the same pretences for delay will obtrude themselves; so that we shall be as apt

[e] Ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἴομεν· δὴ γὰρ μέμβλωκε μάλιστα
Ἦμαρ· ἀτὰρ τάχα τοι ποτὶ ἕσπερα ῥίγιον ἔσται.—
Hom. Od. XVII. [190.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

then as now to prorogue the business. We shall say then, to-morrow I will mend; and when that morrow cometh, it will be still to-morrow, and so the morrow will prove endless[f]. If, like the simple rustic, (who stayed by the river-side waiting till it had done running, so that he might pass dry-foot over the channel,) we do conceit that the sources of sin (bad inclinations within, and strong temptations abroad) will of themselves be spent, or fail, we shall find ourselves deluded[g]. If ever we come to take up, we must have a beginning with some difficulty and trouble; we must courageously break through the present with all its enchantments; we must undauntedly plunge into the cold stream; we must rouse ourselves from our bed of sloth; we must shake off that brutish improvidence, which detaineth us; and why should we not assay it now? There is the same reason now that ever we can have; yea, far more reason now; for if that we now begin, hereafter at any determinate time, some of the work will be done, what remaineth will be shorter and easier to us[h]. Nay, further,

4 We may consider, that the more we defer, the more difficult and painful our work must needs

[f] Cras hoc fiet. Idem cras fiet, &c.—
Pers. Sat. v. [66.]
Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.—
Ovid. [Rem. Am. 94.]

[g] Qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis; at ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.—
Hor Ep. I. 2. [41.]

[h] Εἰ μὲν οὖν λυσιτελὴς ἡ ὑπέρθεσίς ἐστιν, ἡ παντελὴς ἀπόστασις αὐτῆς ἐστι λυσιτελεστέρα.—Epict. Diss. IV. 12. [3.]
For the same reason we put it off, we should put it away. If it be good at all, it is good at present.

Digitized by Google

prove; every day will both enlarge our task and diminish our ability to perform it[1]. Sin is never at a stay; if we do not retreat from it, we shall advance in it; and the further on we go, the more we have to come back; every step we take forward (even before we can return hither, into the state wherein we are at present) must be repeated; all the web we spin must be unravelled; we must vomit up all we take in: which to do we shall find very tedious and grievous.

Vice, as it groweth in age, so it improveth in stature and strength; from a puny child it soon waxeth a lusty stripling, then riseth to be a sturdy man, and after a while becometh a massy giant, whom we shall scarce dare to encounter, whom we shall be very hardly able to vanquish; especially seeing, that as it groweth taller and stouter, so we shall dwindle and prove more impotent: for it feedeth upon our vitals, and thriveth by our decay; it waxeth mighty by stripping us of our best forces, by enfeebling our reason, by perverting our will, by corrupting our temper, by debasing our courage, by seducing all our appetites and passions to a treacherous compliance with itself: every day our mind groweth more blind, our will more resty, our spirit more faint, our appetites more fierce, our passions more headstrong and untameable[k]; the power and empire of sin do strangely by degrees encroach, and continually get ground upon us, till

[1] Παρὰ τὸ σήμερον ἁμαρτηθὲν εἰς τἄλλα χεῖρον ἀνάγκη σοι τὰ πράγματα ἔχειν.—Id. ibid. [1.]

[k] Falsis opinionibus tanto quisque inseritur magis, quanto magis in eis familiariusque volutatur.—Aug. [Ep. IV. Opp. Tom. II. col. 6 E.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

it hath quite subdued and enthralled us. First we learn to bear it; then we come to like it; by and by we contract a friendship with it; then we dote upon it; at last we become enslaved to it in a bondage, which we shall hardly be able or willing to shake off; when not only our necks are fitted to the yoke, our hands are manacled, and our feet shackled thereby; but our heads and hearts do conspire in a base submission thereto: when vice hath made such impression on us, when this pernicious weed hath taken so deep root in our mind, will, and affections, it will demand an extremely toilsome labour to extirpate it.

Indeed, by continuance in sin, the chief means (afforded by nature, or by grace) of restraining or reducing us from it, are either cut off, or enervated and rendered ineffectual.

Natural modesty, while it lasteth, is a curb from doing ill[1]; men in their first deflexions from virtue are bashful and shy; out of regard to other men's opinion, and tenderness of their own honour, they are afraid or ashamed to transgress plain rules of duty: but in process this disposition weareth out; by little and little they arrive to that character of the degenerate Jews, whom the Prophets call impudent children, having a brow of brass, and faces harder than a rock; so that they commit sin with open face, and in broad day, without any mask, without a blush; they despise their own reputation,

Ezek. ii. 4; iii. 7. Isai. xlviii. 4. Jer. v. 3. Prov. xxi. 29.

[1] Μέγιστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν βοήθημα ἡ αἰδώς.—Greg. Naz. [Or. XXXII. Opp. Tom. I. p. 582 A.]

Nam quis
Peccandi finem posuit sibi? quando recepit
Ejectum semel attrita de fronte ruborem?—
Juv. Sat. [XIII. 240.]

Digitized by Google

and defy all censure of others; they outface and outbrave the world, till at length, with prodigious insolence, they come to boast of wickedness, and glory in their shame, as an instance of high courage and special gallantry. SERM. XLIII. Phil. iii. 19.

Conscience is a check to beginners in sin, reclaiming them from it, and rating them for it: but this in long standers becometh useless, either failing to discharge its office, or assaying it to no purpose; having often been slighted, it will be weary of chiding; or, if it be not wholly dumb, we shall be deaf to its reproof: as those, who live by cataracts or downfalls of water, are, by continual noise, so deafened, as not to hear or mind it; so shall we in time grow senseless, not regarding the loudest peals and rattlings of our conscience[m].

The heart of a raw novice in impiety is somewhat tender and soft, so that remorse can pierce and sting it; his neck is yielding and sensible, so that the yoke of sin doth gall it: but in stout proficients the heart becometh hard and stony, the neck stiff and brawny; (*An iron sinew,* as the Prophet termeth it;) so that they do not feel or resent any thing[n]; but are like those of whom St Paul speaketh, Οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες, *Who being past feeling* all sorrow or smart, *have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* Neh. ix. 29. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Dan. v. 20. Isai. xlviii. 4. Eph. iv. 19.

When first we nibble at the bait, or enter into bad courses, our reason doth contest and remonstrate against it, faithfully representing to us the

[m] Ψυχὴ γὰρ ἅπαξ ἁμαρτίας γευσαμένη καὶ ἀναλγήτως διατεθεῖσα πολλὴν παρέχει τῷ νοσήματι τὴν προσθήκην. &c.—Chrys. Orat. LXIV. Opp. Tom. V. p. 453.]

[n] Quo quis pejus se habet, minus sentit.—Sen. Ep. LIII. [7.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

folly, the ugliness, the baseness, the manifold ill consequences of sinning; but that, by continuance, is muffled, so as not to discern, or muzzled, so as not to declare; yea, often is so debauched as to excuse, to avow, and maintain, yea, to applaud and extol our miscarriages.

For a time a man retaineth some courage, and a hope that he may repent; but progress in sin dispiriteth and casteth into despair, whether God be placable, whether himself be corrigible: an apprehension concerning the length of the way or the difficulty of the work, discourageth; and despondency rendereth him heartless and careless to attempt it. There is no man that hath heard of God, who hath not at first some dread of offending him, and some dissatisfaction in transgressing his will; it appearing to his mind, not yet utterly blinded and depraved, a desperate thing to brave his irresistible power, an absurd thing to thwart his infallible wisdom, a detestable thing to abuse his immense goodness: but obstinacy in sin doth quash this conscientious awe; so that at length,

Ps. x. 4; xxxvi. 1. *God is not in all his thoughts; The fear of God is not before his eyes;* the wrath of the Almighty seemeth a bugbear, the fiercest menaces of Religion sound but as rattles to him.

As for the gentle whispers and touches of divine grace, the monitory dispensations of Providence, the good advices and wholesome reproofs of friends, with the like means of reclaiming sinners; these

Jer. xlviii. 11. Zeph. i. 12. to persons settled on their lees, or fixed in bad custom, are but as gusts of wind brushing an old oak, or as waves dashing on a rock, without at all shaking or stirring it.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

Now when any person is come to this pass, it must be hugely difficult to reduce him; to retrieve a defloured modesty, to quicken a jaded conscience, to supple a callous heart, to resettle a baffled reason, to rear a dejected courage, to recover a soul miserably benumbed and broken, to its former vigour and integrity, can be no easy matter.

The diseases of our soul, no less than those of our body, when once they are inveterate, they are become near incurable; the longer we forbear to apply due remedy, the more hard their cure will prove°: if we let them proceed far, we must, ere we can be rid of them, undergo a course of physic very tedious and offensive to us; many a rough purge, many a sore phlebotomy, many an irksome sweat we must endure. Yea, further,

5 We may consider, that by delaying to amend, to do it may become quite impossible; it may be so in the nature of the thing, it may be so by the will of God: the thing may become naturally impossible; for vice by custom may pass into nature, and prove so congenial, as if it were born with us; so that we shall propend to it, as a stone falleth down, or as a spark flieth upward: by soaking in voluptuousness we may be so transformed into brutes, by steeping in malice so converted into fiends, that we necessarily shall act like creatures of that kind, into which we are degenerated; and then nowise, without a downright miracle, are we

° Sera medicina paratur
Cum mala per longas convaluere moras.—
Ovid. [Rem. Am. 91.]

Ῥᾷον γὰρ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μὴ ἐνδοῦναι κακίᾳ, καὶ προσιοῦσαν διαφυγεῖν, ἢ προβαινοῦσαν ἀνακόψαι.—Greg. Naz. [Orat XXXII. Opp. Tom. I. p. 598 C.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

capable of being reformed[p]. *How long*, saith Solomon, *wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* We may be so often called on; and it is not easy to awaken us, when we are got into a spiritual slumber; but when we are dead in trespasses and sin, so that all breath of holy affection is stopped, and no spiritual pulse from our heart doth appear; that all sense of duty is lost, all appetite to good doth fail, no strength or activity to move in a good course doth exert itself, that our good complexion is dissolved, and all our finer spirits are dissipated, that our mind is quite crazed, and all its powers are shattered or spoiled; when thus, I say, we are spiritually dead, how can we raise ourselves, what beneath omnipotency can effect it? As a stick, when once it is dry and stiff, you may break it, but you can never bend it into a straighter posture; so doth the man become incorrigible, who is settled and stiffened in vice[q]. The stain of habitual sin may sink in so deep, and so thoroughly tincture all our soul, that we may be like those people of whom the Prophet saith, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Such an impossibility may arise from nature; one greater and more insuperable may come from God.

Prov. vi. 9.

Eph. ii. 1. Rev. iii. 1. 1 Tim. v. 6.

Jer xiii. 23.

To an effectual repentance, the succour of divine grace is necessary; but that is arbitrarily dispensed; *The Spirit bloweth where it listeth;* yet it listeth

John iii. 8.

[p] Ἐπειδὰν εἰς φρενίτιν ἐκπεσόντες λακτίζωσι καὶ δάκνωσι τοὺς βουλομένους ἀπαλλάξαι τῆς ἀῤῥωστίας αὐτοὺς, τότε νοσοῦσιν ἀνίατα.—Chrys. in Babyl. Orat. II. [Opp. Tom. v. p. 454.]

[q] Frangas enim citius quam corrigas quæ in pravum induruerunt.—Quintil. I 3 [12.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

wisely, with regard both to the past behaviour and present capacities of men; so that to such who have abused it, and to such who will not treat it well, it shall not be imparted. And can we be well assured, can we reasonably hope, that after we by our presumptuous delays have put off God, and dallied with his grace; after that he long in vain hath waited to be gracious; after that he hath endured so many neglects, and so many repulses from us; after that we frequently have slighted his open invitations, and smothered his kindly motions in us; in short, after we so unworthily have misused his goodness and patience, that he further will vouchsafe his grace to us? When we have forfeited it, when we have rejected it, when we have spurned[r] and driven it away, can we hope to recover it?

Isai. xxx. 18.

Heb. x. 29; vi. 4.

There is a time, a season, a day, allotted to us; our day, it is termed, a day of salvation, the season of our visitation, an acceptable time; wherein God freely doth exhibit grace, and presenteth his mercy to us: if we let this day slip, *The night cometh, when no man can work;* when the things belonging to our peace will be hidden from our eyes; when (as the Prophet expresseth it), *We shall grope for the wall like the blind, and stumble at noonday as in the night, and be in desolate places as dead men:* after that day is spent, and that comfortable light is set, a dismal night of darkness, of cold, of disconsolateness, will succeed; when God being weary of bearing with men, doth utterly desert them, and delivereth them over to a reprobate mind; when subtracting his gracious direction and assistance,

Luke xix. 42, 44. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Heb. iii. 13. John ix. 4.

Luke xix. 42.

Isai. lix. 10.

Jer. xv. 6. Mal. ii. 17. Isai. i. 14; vii. 13.

[r] Τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας.—Heb. x. 29.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

Rom. i. 24, 28. *He giveth them over to their own hearts' lusts, and to walk in their own counsels;* when they are brought to complain with those in the Prophet, *O Lord,* Ps. lxxxi. 12. *why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and* Isai. lxiii. 17. *hardened our heart from thy fear?* when, like Rom. ix. 17. Pharaoh, they survive only as objects of God's justice, or occasions to glorify his power; when, Heb. xii. 17. like Esau, they cannot find a place of repentance, although they seek it carefully with tears; when, Matt. xxv. 10. as to the foolish loitering virgins, the door of mercy Luke xiii. 25. is shut upon them; when the master of the house doth rise and shut the door, when that menace of Prov. i. 28, 29. divine wisdom cometh to be executed; *They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.* And if, neglecting our season and present means[s], we once fall into this state, then is our case most deplorable; we are dead men irreversibly doomed, and only for a few moments reprieved Rom. ix. 22. from the stroke of final vengeance; *We are vessels of wrath fitted up* (or *made* up) *for destruction;* κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν; by a fatal blindness and obduration sealed up to ruin; we are like the *Terra* Heb. vi. 7, 8. *damnata, That earth* (in the Apostle) *which drinking up the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bearing thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing,* and *whose end is to be burned.*

It is true, that God is ever ready, upon our true conversion, to receive us into favour; that his arms are always open to embrace a sincere Ezek. xviii. 27. penitent; that he hath declared, *Whenever a wicked*

[s] *Seek ye the Lord, when he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near.*—Isai. lv. 6.

Digitized by Google

man turneth from his wickedness, and doeth that which is right, he shall save his soul alive; that if we do wash ourselves, make us clean, put away the evil of our doings, and cease to do evil, then, *Although our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool;* that if we rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, he is gracious and merciful, and will repent of the evil; that *God is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon him;* that whenever a prodigal son, with humble confession and hearty contrition for his sin, doth arise and go to his father, he will embrace him tenderly, and entertain him kindly; that even a profane apostate[t], and a bloody oppressor, as Manasses, a lewd strumpet, as Magdalene, a notable thief, as he upon the cross, a timorous renouncer, as St Peter, a furious persecutor, as St Paul, a stupid idolator, as all the heathen world, when the Gospel came to them, was, the most heinous sinner that ever hath been, or can be imagined to be, if he be disposed to repent, is capable of mercy; those declarations and promises are infallibly true; those instances peremptorily do evince, that repentance is never superannuated; that if we can turn at all, we shall not turn too late; that *Pœnitentia nunquam sera, modo seria,* is an irrefragable rule. Yet nevertheless delay is very unsafe; for what assurance can we have, that God hereafter will enable us to perform those conditions of bewailing our sins, and

Isa. i. 16. Ib. 18. Joel ii. 13. Ps. lxxxvi. 5. Luke xv. 18.

[t] Vid. Chrys. ad Theod. II. Judas (saith he there) was capable of pardon. [Ἐγὼ γὰρ, εἰ καὶ παράδοξον τὸ λεγομένον, οὐδε ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἁμάρτημα εἴποιμι ἂν μεῖζον εἶναι τῆς ἀπὸ τῆς μετανοίας βοηθείας ἐγγινομένης ἡμῖν.—Opp. Tom. VI. p. 68.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

forsaking them? Have we not cause rather to fear, that he will chastise our presumption by withholding his grace? For although God faileth not to yield competent aids to persons who have not despised his goodness and longsuffering, that leadeth them to repentance; yet he that wilfully or wantonly loitereth away the time, and squandereth the means allowed him; who refuseth to come when God calleth, yea wooeth and courteth him to repentance, how can he pretend to find such favour?

Rom. ii. 4.

We might add, that supposing God in superabundance of mercy might be presumed never to withhold his grace; yet seeing his grace doth not work by irresistible compulsion; seeing the worse qualified we are, the more apt we shall be to cross and defeat its operation; seeing that we cannot hope, that hereafter we shall be more fit than now to comply with it; yea seeing we may be sure, that, after our hearts are hardened by perseverance in sin, we shall be more indisposed thereto; we by delay of repentance do not only venture the forfeiture of divine grace, but the danger of abusing it, which heinously will aggravate our guilt, and hugely augment our punishment.

We should do well therefore most seriously to regard the Apostle's admonition; *Exhort one another to-day, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.* Now that we find ourselves invited to repent; now that we apprehend so much reason for it; now that we feel our hearts somewhat inclined thereto; now that we have time in our hands, and are not barred from hopes of mercy; now that it is not extremely

Heb. iii. 13.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

difficult, or not absolutely impossible, let us in God's name lay hold on the occasion, let us speedily and earnestly set upon the work. Further yet,

6 We should consider, that we are mortal and frail, and thence any designs of future reformation may be clipt off, or intercepted by death; which is always creeping toward us, and may, for all we can tell, be very near at hand. You say you will repent to-morrow: but are you sure you shall have a morrow to repent in[u]? Have you an hour in your hand, or one minute at your disposal? Have you a lease to shew for any term of life? Can you claim, or reckon upon, the least portion of time without his leave, who bestoweth life, and dealeth out time, and ordereth all things as he pleaseth? Can you anywise descry the just measure of your days, or the bounds of your appointed time, without a special revelation from him, in whose hands is your breath; and with whom alone the number of your months is registered? *Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth,* saith the Wise Man; boast not of it, that is, do not pretend it to be at thy disposal[x], presume not upon any thing that may befall therein; for whilst thou presumest thereon, may it not be said unto thee, as to the rich projector in the Gospel, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee?* Doth not, secluding hidden decrees, every man's life hang upon a thread very slender and frail? Is it not subject to many diseases lurking

Job xii. 10; xiv. 5; vii. 1. Ps. xxxix. 4; xc. 12. Dan. v. 23. Prov. xxvii. 1. Luke xii. 20.

[u] Qui pœnitenti veniam spospondit, peccanti crastinum diem non promisit —Greg. in Evang. Hom. IX. [Opp. Tom. I. col. 1479.]

[x] Οὐκ οἶδας τι τέξεται ἡ ἐπιοῦσα· μὴ ἐπαγγέλλου τὰ μὴ σά —Bas. M. Exhort. ad Bapt. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 114 D.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

within, and to a thousand accidents flying about us? How many, that might have promised themselves as fair scope as we can, have been unexpectedly snapt away! How many have been cropt in the flower of their age and vigour of their strength! Doth not every day present experiments of sudden death? Do we not continually see that observation of the Preacher verified, *Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it cometh suddenly upon them?* Old men are ready to drop of themselves, and young men are easily brushed or shaken down, the former visibly stand upon the brink of eternity, the latter walk upon a bottomless quag, into which unawares they may slump; who then can anywise be secure[y]? We are all therefore highly concerned to use our life, while we have it; to catch the first opportunity, lest all opportunity forsake us; to cut off our sinning, lest ourselves be cut off before it; and that the rather, because by lavishing, or misemploying our present time, we may lose the future, provoking God to bereave us of it: for as prolongation of time is a reward of piety; as, to observance of the commandments, it is promised, *Length of days, and long life, and peace, shall be added unto thee;* so being immaturely snatched hence is the punishment awarded to impious practice: so it is threatened, that, *Evil men shall be cut off;* that, *Bloody and deceitful men shall*

Eccles. ix. 12.

Prov. iii. 2.

Ps. xxxvii. 9; lv. 23.

[y] Τί γὰρ οἶδας, ἄνθρωπε ἁμαρτήσας, εἰ ἡμέρας ζήσεις ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ, ἵνα καὶ μετανοήσῃς; Ὅτι ἄδηλος ἡ ἔξοδός σου ἐκ τοῦ βίου ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ τελευτήσαντι μετάνοια οὐκ ἔσται. &c.—Const. Ap. II. 13. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. I. p. 221.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

not live out half their days; that, *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his wickedness:* the very being unmindful of their duty is the cause why men are thus surprised; for, *If,* saith God, *thou dost not watch, I shall come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know when I come upon thee.* And, *If,* saith our Lord, *that servant doth say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming,* &c. *the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him,* &c.

Ps. lxviii. 21. Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15. Luke xii. 45, 46.

If then it be certain, that we must render a strict account of all our doings here; if, by reason of our frail nature and slippery state, it be uncertain when we shall be summoned thereto; if our negligence may abridge and accelerate the term[z]; is it not very reasonable to observe those advices of our Lord; *Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh: Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares: Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like men that wait for your Lord?*

Matt. xxv. 13; xxiv. 42. Mark xiii. 33. Luke xii. 15, 35, 36.

These considerations plainly do shew how very foolish, how extremely dangerous and destructive the procrastinating our reformation of life is: there are some others of good moment, which we shall touch.

1 We may consider the causes of delay in this

[z] *Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day: for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance.*—Ecclus. v. 7.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

case (as in all cases of moment) to be bad, and unworthy of a man: what can they be but either stupidity, that we do not apprehend the importance of the affair; or improvidence, that we do not attend to the danger of persisting in sin; or negligence, that we do not mind our concernments; or sloth[a], that keepeth us from rousing and bestirring ourselves in pursuance of what appeareth expedient; or faint-heartedness and cowardice, that we dare not attempt to cross our appetite or our fancy? All which dispositions are very base and shameful. It is the prerogative of human nature to be sagacious in estimating the worth, and provident in descrying the consequences of things[b]; whereas other creatures, by impulse of sense, do only fix their regard on present appearances; which peculiar excellency by stupidity and improvidence we forfeit, degenerating into brutes; and negligence of that, which we discern mainly to concern us, is a quality somewhat beneath those, depressing us below beasts, which cannot be charged with such a fault; sloth is no less despicable, rendering a man fit for nothing; nor is there any thing commonly more reproachful than want of courage: so bad are the causes of delay.

2 And the effects are no less unhappy; being disappointment, damage, trouble, and sorrow. As expedition (catching advantages and opportunities,

[a] Ἀργίας πρόφασις, ἡ ἀναβολή.—Simpl. [Comment. in Epict. Ench. cap. LXXV.]

[b] Animal hoc providum, sagax, multiplex, acutum, memor, plenum rationis et consilii, quem vocamus hominem.—Cic. de Leg. I. [7. 22.]

Homo autem, qui rationis est particeps, per quam consequentia cernit, causas rerum videt.—Id. de Off. I. [4. 11.]

Digitized by Google

keeping the spirit up in its heat and vigour, making forcible impressions wherever it lighteth, driving on the current of success) doth subdue business, and achieve great exploits, (as by practising his motto, to defer nothing[c], Alexander did accomplish those mighty feats, which make such a clatter in story; and Cæsar more by the rapid quickness and forwardness of undertaking[d], than by the greatness of courage, and skilfulness of conduct, did work out those enterprises, which purchased to his name so much glory and renown;) so delay and slowness do spoil all business, do keep off success at distance from us; thereby opportunity is lost, and advantages slip away; our courage doth flag, and our spirit languisheth; our endeavours strike faintly, and are easily repelled; whence disappointment necessarily doth spring, attended with vexation[e].

3 Again, we may consider, that to set upon our duty is a great step toward the performance of it: if we can resolve well, and a little push forward, we are in a fair way to despatch; to begin, they say, is to have half done[f]; to set out is a good part of

[c] Μηδὲν ἀναβαλλόμενος.

[d] Successus urgere suos: instare favori
Numinis.— Luc. Phars. I. [148.]

[e] Plerisque in rebus tarditas et procrastinatio odiosa est.—Cic. Philip. VI. [cap. III. 7.]

Αἰεὶ δ' ἀμβολιεργὸς ἀνὴρ ἄτῃσι παλαίει.—
Hes. [Op. et Di. 411.]

Dum deliberamus, quando incipiendum est, incipere jam serum est.—Quint. XII. [6. 3.]

[f] Dimidium facti, qui cœpit, habet.—
Hor. Ep. I. [2. 40.]

Μόνον ἀρχὴν ἐπιθὲς τῷ πράγματι, καὶ τὴν εἰς τοὺς ἀγῶνας εἴσοδον ἄνοιξον.—Chrys. ad Theod. II. Opp. Tom. VI. p. 68.

Τὸ δυσχερὲς καὶ δυσκατόρθωτον τοῦτο ἔστι, τὸ δυνηθῆναι ἐπιβῆναι τῆς εἰσόδου, καὶ τῶν προθύρων ἅψασθαι τῆς μετανοίας, &c.—Id. Ibid. p. 79.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

the journey; to rise betimes is often harder than to do all the day's work: entering the town is almost the same with taking it; it is so in all business, it is chiefly so in moral practice: for if we can find in our hearts to take our leave of sin, if we can disengage ourselves from the witcheries of present allurement, if we can but get over the threshold of virtuous conversation, we shall find the rest beyond expectation smooth and expedite; we shall discover such beauty in virtue, we shall taste so much sweetness in obedience, as greatly will encourage us to proceed therein[g].

4 Again: we may consider, that our time itself is a gift, or a talent committed to us, for the improvement whereof we are responsible no less than for our wealth, our power, our credit, our parts, and other such advantages, wherewith for the serving of God, and furthering our own salvation, we are intrusted; *To redeem the time* is a precept, and of all precepts the most necessary to be observed; for that without redeeming (that is, embracing and well employing) time we can do nothing well; no good action can be performed, no good reward can be procured by us: well may we be advised to take our best care in husbanding it, seeing justly of all things it may be reckoned most precious[h]; its price being inestimable, and its loss irreparable; for all the world cannot purchase one moment of it more than is allowed us; neither can it, when once gone, by any means be recovered: so much indeed as we save thereof, so much we preserve

Eph. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

[g] Honestas, quæ principio anxia habetur; ubi contigerit, voluptati luxuriæque est.—Vict. in Sept. Sev. [p. 266. Ed. Var. Amstel. 1670.]

[h] Πολυτελὲς ἀνάλωμα.—[Diog. Laer. (Vit. Theoph.) v. 2. 10.]

Digitized by Google

of ourselves; and so far as we lose it, so far in effect we slay ourselves, or deprive ourselves of life; yea by misspending it we do worse than so, for a dead sleep, or a cessation from being, is not so bad as doing ill; all that while we live backward, or decline toward a state much worse than annihilation itself. Further,

5 Consider, that of all time the present is ever the best for the purpose of amending our life[i]. It is the only sure time, that which we have in our hands, and may call our own; whereas the past time is irrevocably gone from us; and the future may never come to us: it is absolutely (reckoning from our becoming sensible of things, and accountable for our actions,) the best, as to our capacity of improving it;

> **Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi**
> **Prima fugit[k].**

Our best days do first pass away, was truly said; the nearer to its source our life is, the purer it is from stain, the freer from clogs, the more susceptive of good impressions, the more vivid and brisk in its activity; the further we go on, especially in a bad course, the nearer we verge to the dregs of our life; the more dry, the more stiff, the more sluggish we grow: delay therefore doth ever steal away the flower of our age, leaving us the bran and refuse thereof. Again,

6 If at any time we do reflect upon the time that hath already slipped away unprofitably from us, it will seem more than enough, and (if we consider well) it will be grievous to us to lose more;

[i] Omnia quæ ventura sunt, in incerto jacent; protinus vive.—Sen. de Vit. Brev. cap. IX.

[k] Virg. Georg. III. [66.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

the morrow will seem too late to commence a good life[1]; Ἀρκετὸς ἡμῖν ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος, *The time past of our life,* saith St Peter, *may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,* or to have continued in ill courses: more indeed it might than suffice; it should be abundantly too much to have embezzled so large a portion of our precious and irreparable time: after we have slept in neglect of our duty, Ὥρα ἤδη ἐγερθῆναι, *It is,* as St Paul saith, *now high time to awake* unto a vigilant observance thereof: this we shall the rather do, if we consider, that,

1 Pet. iv. 3.

Rom. xiii. 11.

7 For ill living now we shall come hereafter to be sorry, if not with a wholesome contrition, yet with a painful regret; we shall certainly one day repent, if not of our sin, yet of our sinning; if not so as to correct for the future, yet so as to condemn ourselves for what is past: the consideration of our having sacrilegiously robbed our Maker of the time due to his service; of our having injuriously defrauded our souls of the opportunities granted to secure their welfare; of our having profusely cast away our most precious hours of life upon vanity and folly, will sometime twitch us sorely. There is no man who doth not with a sorrowful eye review an ill-past life; who would not gladly recall his misspent time; *O mihi præteritos*[m]*!* O that God would restore my past years to me, is every such man's prayer, although it never was heard, never could be granted unto any. And what is more inconsistent with wisdom, than to engage

[1] Sera nimis vita est crastina: vive hodie.— Mart. I. 16. [12.]

[m] [Virg Æn. VIII. 560.]

Digitized by Google

ourselves upon making such ineffectual and fruitless wishes? What is more disagreeable to reason, than to do that, for which we must be forced to confess and call ourselves fools? What man of sense, for a flash of transitory pleasure, for a puff of vain repute, for a few scraps of dirty pelf, would plunge himself into such a gulf of anguish? SERM. XLIII.

8 On the contrary, if, laying hold on occasion, we set ourselves to do well, reflection thereon will yield great satisfaction and pleasure to us; we shall be glad that we have done, and that our task is over; we shall enjoy our former life: our time which is so past will not yet be lost unto us; but rather it will be most securely ours, laid up beyond the reach of danger, in the repository of a good conscience[n].

9 Again, all our time of continuance in sin we do treasure up wrath, or accumulate guilt; and the larger our guilt is, the sorer must be our repentance[o]; the more bitter the sorrow, the more low the humbling, the more earnest the deprecation requisite to obtain pardon; the broader and deeper the stain is, the more washing is needful to get it out; if we sin much and long, we must grieve answerably, or we shall be no fit objects of mercy. Rom. ii. 5.

10 And whenever the sin is pardoned, yet indelible marks and monuments thereof will abide. We shall eternally be obliged to cry *peccavi:*

[n] Ille sapit quisquis, Posthume, vixit heri.—
Mart. v. [58. 8.]
Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus; hoc est
Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui.—
Id. x. [23. 7.]

[o] Quam magna deliquimus, tam granditer defleamus. &c.—Cypr. de Laps. [Opp. p. 192.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

although the punishment may be remitted, the desert of it cannot be removed; a scar from it will stick in our flesh, which ever will deform us; a tang of it will stay in our memory, which always will be disgustful; we shall never reflect on our miscarriages without some confusion and horror[p]; incessantly we shall be liable to that question of St Paul, *What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* If, therefore, we could reasonably presume, yea if we could certainly foresee, that we should hereafter in time repent, yet it were unadvisable to persist in sin, seeing it being once committed, can never be reversed, never expunged from the registers of time, never dashed out from the tables of our mind and memory; but will perpetually rest as matter of doleful consideration, and of tragical story to us. *Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed. (That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.) Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.*

Rom. vi. 21.

Ezek. xvi. 61, 63; xxxvi. 31; xx. 43.

11 Again, so much time as we spend in disobedience, so much of reward we do forfeit; for commensurate to our works shall our rewards be; the fewer our good works are in the course of our present life, the smaller shall be the measures of

[p] Pœna potest demi, culpa perennis erit.—
Ovid. [Epist. I. 1. 64.]

Ἡ συγχώρησις ἐγένετο τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῶν συγκεχωρημένων ἁμαρτημάτων οὐκ ἠφανίζετο παρὰ τῷ Παύλῳ. —Chrys. Opp. Tom. VIII. p. 97.

Digitized by Google

joy, of glory, of felicity dispensed to us hereafter; the later consequently we repent, the less we shall be happy: *One star,* saith the Apostle, *differeth from another in glory:* and of all stars, those in the celestial sphere will shine brightest, who did soon rise here, and continued long, by the lustre of their good works, to glorify their heavenly Father; for, *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* While, therefore, we let our interest lie dead by lingering, or run behind by sinful practice, we are very bad husbands for our soul; our spiritual estate doth thereby hugely suffer; every minute contracteth a damage, that runneth through millions of ages, and which therefore will amount to an immense sum: and who for all the pleasures here would forego one degree of blissful joy hereafter? who for all earthly splendours would exchange one spark of celestial glory?. who for all the treasures below would let slip one gem out of his heavenly crown?

SERM. XLIII.

1 Cor. xv. 41.

Prov. iv. 18.

12 Further, let us consider that whatever our age, whatever our condition or case be, the advice not to procrastinate our obedience is very suitable and useful.

Art thou young? then it is most proper to enter upon living well[q]. For when we set out, we should be put in a right way; when we begin to be men, we should begin to use our reason well; life and virtue should be of the same standing. What is more ugly than a child, that hath learnt little, having learnt to do ill? than naughtiness springing up in that state of innocence? The

[q] Sub pædagogo cœperis licet, serum est.— Mart. VIII. 44. [2.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

foundation of good life is to be laid in that age, upon which the rest of our life is built; for this is the manner of our proceeding; the present always dependeth upon what is past; our practice is guided by notions that we had sucked in, is swayed by inclinations that we got before; whence usually our first judgments of things, and our first propensions do stretch their influence upon the whole future life. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, saith the Wise Man.

Prov. xxii. 6.

That age, as it is most liable to be corrupted by vice, so it is most capable of being imbued with virtue; then nature is soft and pliable, so as easily to be moulded into any shape, ready to admit any stamp impressed thereon[r]; then the mind is a pure table, in which good principles may be fairly engraven without rasing out any former ill prejudices; then the heart being a soil free of weeds, the seeds of goodness being cast therein will undisturbedly grow and thrive; then the complexion being tender will easily be set into a right posture: our soul is then a vessel empty and sweet; good liquor therefore may be instilled, which will both fill it, and season it with a durable tincture; the extreme curiosity and huge credulity of that age, as they greedily will swallow any, so will they admit good instruction. If we do then imbibe false conceptions, or have bad impressions made on our minds, it will be hard afterwards to expel, or to

[r] Natura tenacissimi sumus eorum, quæ rudibus annis percipimus, &c.—Quint. I. 1. [5.]

Difficulter eraditur, quod rudes animi perbiberunt.—Hier. ad Lætam. [Ep. LVII. Opp. Tom. IV. p. ii. col. 592.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

correct them[s]. Passion is then very fluid and moveable, but, not being impetuously determined any way, may easily be derived into the right channel. Then the quickness of our wit, the briskness of our fancy, the freshness of our memory, the vigour of our affections, the lusty and active mettle of our spirits, being applied to virtuous studies and endeavours, will produce most noble fruits; the beauty of which will adorn us, the sweetness will please us, so as to leave on our minds a perpetual relish and satisfaction in goodness[t]. Then, being less encumbered with the cares, less entangled in the perplexities, less exposed to the temptations of the world and secular affairs, we can more easily set forth, we may proceed more expeditely in good courses. Then, being void of that stinging remorse, which doth adhere to reflections upon past follies and misspent time, with more courage and alacrity we may prosecute good undertakings; then, beginning so soon to embrace virtue, we shall have advantage with more leisure and more ease to polish and perfect it through our ensuing course of life; setting out so early, in the very morning of our age, without much straining, marching on softly and fairly, we may go through our journey to happiness.

Our actions then are the first-fruits of our life, which, therefore, are fit and due sacrifices to our

[s] Ut corpora ad quosdam membrorum flexus formari, nisi tenera, non possunt, sic animos quoque ad pleraque duriores robur ipsum facit.—Quint. I. 1. [22.]

Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu.— Hor. Ep. I. 2. [69.]

[t] *Ἥδει γὰρ ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἡ νεότης, ὅτι εὐρίπιστον, ὅτι εὐεξαπάτητον, ὅτι εὐόλισθον, καὶ σφοδροτέρου δεῖ τοῦ χαλινοῦ.*—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. α'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 451.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

Maker; which if we do withdraw, we shall have nothing left so worthy or acceptable to present unto him. Will it be seemly to offer him the dregs and refuse of our age? Shall we not be ashamed to bring a crazy temper of body and soul, dry bones, and decayed senses, a dull fancy, a treacherous memory, a sluggish spirit before him? Shall we then, when we are fit for little, begin to undertake his service? With our decrepit limbs and wasted strength shall we set ourselves to run the ways of his commandments? As it is uncomfortable to think of being parsimonious, when our stock is almost gone; so it is to become thrifty of our life when it comes near the bottom[u].

Ps. cxix. 32.

If we keep innocency, spend our youth well, it will yield unexpressible comfort to us; it will save us much sorrow, it will prevent many inconveniences to us: if we have spent it ill, it will yield us great displeasure, it will cost us much pains; we shall be forced sadly to bewail our folly and vanity therein; it will be bitter to see, that we must unlive our former life, and undo all we have done; that we must renounce the principles we have avowed, we must root out the habits we have planted, we must forsake the paths which we have beaten and so long trod in, if ever we will be happy; it will be grievous to us, when we come with penitential regret to deprecate, *Lord, remember not the sins of my youth;* we shall feel sore pain, when *Our bones are full of the sins of our youth;* and we come *To possess the iniquities thereof.*

Ps. xxv. 7. Job xx. 11; xiii. 26.

Lam. iii. 27.

It is therefore *good,* as the Prophet saith, *that a*

[u] Δειλὴ δ' ἐνὶ πυθμένι φειδώ.—
[Hes. Op. et Di. 367.]

Digitized by Google

man bear the yoke in his youth, when his neck is tender[x]; it is excellent advice which the Preacher giveth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.* Eccles. xii. 1.

Aristotle saith that, *Young men are not idoneous auditors of moral doctrine,* because, saith he, *they are unexperienced in affairs of life;* and *because they are apt to follow their passions, which indispose to hear with fruit or profit*[y]. But this conclusion is false, and his reasons may be well turned against him; for because young men want experience, therefore is there no bad prejudice, no contrary habit to obstruct their embracing sound doctrine; because their passions are vehement and strong, therefore, being rightly ordered, and set upon good objects, they with great force will carry them to virtuous practice: that, indeed, is the best time to regulate and tame passions; as horses must be broken when they are colts, dogs must be made when they are whelps, else they will never be brought to any thing. The poet therefore advised better than the philosopher;

> Nunc adbibe puro
> Pectore verba, puer, nunc te melioribus offer[z]:

and St Paul plainly doth confute him, when he biddeth parents *To educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;* when he Eph. vi. 4.

[x] Fingit equum tenera docilem cervice magister
Ire viam, qua monstrat eques.—
Hor. Ep. I. 2. [64.]

[y] Τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκεῖος ἀκροατὴς ὁ νέος· ἄπειρος γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων... Ἔτι δὲ τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀκολουθητικὸς ὤν, ματαίως ἀκούσεται καὶ ἀνωφελῶς.—Eth. I. 3. [5.]

[z] Hor. Epist. I. 2. [67.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

chargeth Titus, that *He exhort young men to be sober-minded;* when he commendeth Timothy, for that *He had ἀπὸ βρέφους, from his infancy, known the holy scriptures;* so doth the Psalmist, when he saith, *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to thy word.* And Solomon, when he declareth that his moral precepts did serve, *To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion;* when he biddeth us, *To train up a child in the way he should go;* St Peter doth intimate the same when he biddeth us, *As new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word;* and our Saviour, when he said, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God;* that is, the more simplicity and innocence a man is endued with, the more apt he is to embrace and comply with the evangelical doctrine. Aristotle, therefore, was out, when he would exclude young men from the schools of virtue. It is observable that he contradicteth himself; for, Οὐ μικρὸν διαφέρει τὸ οὕτως ἢ οὕτως, εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων ἐθίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ πάμπολυ· μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ πᾶν[a]; *It is,* saith he, *of no small concernment to be from youth accustomed thus or thus; yea, it is very much, or rather all.* And how shall a young man be accustomed to do well, if he be not allowed to learn what is to be done?

Tit. ii. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 22; iii. 15. Ps. cxix. 9. Prov. i. 4; xxii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 2. Luke xviii. 16.

Again; Are we old? it is then high time to begin; we have then less time to spare from our most important business; we stand then in most imminent danger, upon the edge of perdition, and should therefore be nimble to skip out thence; our forces being diminished, our quickness and industry

[a] Eth. II. [I. 8.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

should be increased; the later we set out, the more speed it behoveth us to make. If we stay, we shall grow continually more indisposed and unfit to amend; it will be too late, when utter decrepitness and dotage have seized upon us, and our body doth survive our soul[b]. When so much of our time, of our parts, of our strength, are fled, we should husband the rest to best advantage, and make the best satisfaction we can unto God, and unto our souls, with the remainder.

This age hath some peculiar advantages, which we should embrace: the froth of humours is then boiled out, the fervours of lust are slaked, passions are allayed, appetites are flatted; so that, then, inclinations to sin are not so violent, nor doth the enjoyment thereof so much gratify[c].

Long experience, then, hath discovered the vanity of all worldly things, and the mischief of ill courses; so that we can, then, hardly admire any thing, or be fond of enjoying what we have found unprofitable or hurtful.

Age is excused from compliance with the fashions, and thence much exempted from temptations of the world; so that it may be good without obstacle or opposition.

[b] Quod facere solent qui serius exeunt—calcar addamus.—Sen. Ep. LXVIII. [11.] Vid. Epp. LXXVI. xix.

Στήριξον τὰ λοιπὰ, ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν.—Rev. iii. 2.

[c] Non omnia grandior ætas,
Quæ fugiamus habet.—
Ovid. [Met. VI. 28.]

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ νεότης πελάγει προσέοικε μαινομένῳ, κυμάτων ἀγρίων, καὶ πνευμάτων χέμοντι πονηρῶν· ἡ δὲ πολιὰ ὥσπερ εἰς λιμένα ἀκύμαντον τὰς τῶν γεγηρακότων ὁρμίζει ψυχὰς, παρέχουσα τῇ παρὰ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐντρυφᾷν ἀσφαλείᾳ.—Chrys. Orat. XXXVIII. Opp. Tom. VI. [p. 447.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

It is proper thereto to be grave and serious, and, consequently, to be virtuous; for gravity without virtue, and seriousness about vain things, are ridiculous. Nothing doth so adorn this age as goodness, nothing doth so disgrace it as wickedness; *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness;* but it is a mark of infamy, if it be observed proceeding in a course of iniquity; it signifieth that experience hath not improved it; it argueth incorrigible folly, or rather incurable madness therein.

Prov. xvi. 31.

There is, indeed, no care, no employment proper for old men, but to prepare for their dissolution; to be bidding adieu to the world, with its vain pomps and mischievous pleasures; to be packing up their goods, to be casting their accounts, to be fitting themselves to abide in that state into which they are tumbling; to appear at that bar before which suddenly nature will set them. As a ship, which hath long been tossed and weather-beaten, which is shattered in its timber, and hath lost much of its rigging, should do nothing in that case but work toward the port, there to find its safety and ease; so should a man, who, having passed many storms and agitations of the world, is grievously battered and torn with age, strive only to die well, to get safe into the harbour of eternal rest[d].

In fine, Epicurus himself said well, that, *No man is either immature or overripe in regard to his soul's health*[e], we can never set upon it too soon,

[d] In freto viximus, moriamur in portu.—Sen. Ep. XIX.

[e] Οὔτε γὰρ ἄωρος οὐδείς ἐστιν, οὔτε πάρωρος, πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν ὑγιαῖνον.—Epic. ad Menœc. [Diog. Laert. x. 27, 122.]

Digitized by Google

we should never think it too late to begin: to live well is always the best thing we can do, and therefore we should at any time endeavour it; there are common reasons for all ages, there are special reasons for each age, which most strongly and most clearly do urge it; it is most seasonable for young men, it is most necessary for old men, it is most advisable for all men[f].

Again; be our condition what it will, this advice is reasonable: Are we in health? we owe God thanks for that excellent gift; and the best gratitude we can express is the improving it for his service and our own good: we should not lose the advantage of a season so fit for our obedience and repentance; while the forces of our body and mind are entire, while we are not discomposed by pain or faintness, we should strive to dispatch this needful work, for which infirmity may disable us.

Are we sick? it is then time to consider our frailty, and the best we can to obviate the worst consequences thereof: it is then very fit, when we do feel the sad effects of sin, to endeavour the prevention of worse mischiefs that may follow; it is seasonable, when we lie under God's correcting hand, to submit unto him, to deprecate his wrath, to seek reconciliation with him by all kinds of obedience suitable to that state; with serious resolutions to amend hereafter, if it shall please God to restore us; it is most advisable, when we are in the borders of death, to provide for that state which lieth just beyond it.

[f] Quare, juventus, immo omnis ætas (neque enim rectæ voluntati serum est tempus ullum) totis mentibus huc tendamus, in hoc laboremus; forsan et consummare contingat.—Quint. XII. I. [31.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

Are we rich and prosperous? it is expedient then presently to amend, lest our wealth do soon corrupt us with pride, with luxury, with sloth, with Prov. i. 32. stupidity; lest our prosperity become an inevitable snare, an irrecoverable bane unto us.

Are we poor or afflicted? it is then also needful to repent quickly, that we may have a comfortable support for our soul, and a certain succour in our distress; that we may get a treasure to supply our want, a joy to drown our sorrow, a buoy to keep our hearts from sinking into desperation and disconsolateness. This condition is a medicine, which God administereth for our soul's health; if it do not work presently, so as to do us good, it will prove both grievous and hurtful to us.

13 Lastly, we may consider, that, abating all the rueful consequences of abiding in sin, abstracting from the desperate hazards it exposeth us to in regard to the future life, it is most reasonable to abandon it, betaking ourselves to a virtuous course of practice. For virtue in itself is far more eligible than vice; to keep God's commandments hath much greater convenience than to break them; the life of a good man, in all considerable respects, is highly to be preferred above the life of a bad man: for what is virtue, but a way of living that advanceth our nature into a similitude with God's most excellent and happy nature[g]; that promoteth our true benefit and interest; that procureth and preserveth health, ease, safety, liberty, peace, comfortable subsistence, fair repute, tranquillity of mind, all kinds of convenience to us? To what

[g] Est autem virtus nihil aliud, quam in se perfecta, et ad summum perducta natura.—Cic. de Leg. I. [8. 25.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

ends did our most benign and most wise Maker design and suit his law, but to the furthering our good, and securing us from mischief, as not only himself hath declared, but reason sheweth, and experience doth attest? What is vice, but a sort of practice which debaseth and disparageth us, which plungeth us into grievous evils, which bringeth distemper of body and soul, distress of fortune, danger, trouble, reproach, regret, and numberless inconveniences upon us; which, for no other reason than because it so hurteth and grieveth us, was by our loving Creator interdicted to us? Virtue is most noble and worthy, most lovely, most profitable, most pleasant, most creditable; vice is most sordid and base, ugly, hurtful, bitter, disgraceful in itself, and in its consequences. If we compare them together, we shall find, that virtue doth always preserve our health, but vice commonly doth impair it; that virtue improveth our estate, vice wasteth it; that virtue adorneth our reputation, vice blemisheth it; that virtue strengtheneth our parts, vice weakeneth them; that virtue maintaineth our freedom, vice enslaveth us; that virtue keepeth our mind in order and peace, vice discomposeth and disquieteth it; virtue breedeth satisfaction and joy, vice spawneth displeasure and anguish of conscience: to enter therefore into a virtuous course of life, what is it but to embrace happiness? to continue in vicious practice, what is it but to stick in misery?

Deut. x. 13. Mic. vi. 8. Neh. ix. 13. Rom. vii. 12. Ps. xix. 9

By entering into good life, we enter into the favour and friendship of God, engaging his infinite power and wisdom for our protection, our succour, our direction, and guidance; enjoying the sweet

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIII.

effluxes of his mercy and bounty; we therewith become friends to the holy angels and blessed saints; to all good men, being united in a holy and happy consortship of judgment, of charity, of hope, of devotion with them: we become friends to all the world, which we oblige by good wishes, and good deeds, and by the influence of good example: we become friends to ourselves, whom we thereby enrich and adorn with the best goods; whom we gratify and please with the choicest delights: but, persisting in sin, we continue to affront, wrong, and displease our Maker, to be disloyal toward our sovereign Lord, to be ingrateful toward our chief benefactor, to disoblige the best friend we have, to provoke a most just and severe judge, to cope with omnipotency, to contradict infallibility, to enrage the greatest patience, to abuse immense goodness: we thereby become enemies to all the world; to God, whom we injure and dishonour; to the friends of God, whom we desert and oppose; to the creatures, which we abuse to our pride, lust, and vanity; to our neighbours, whom we corrupt or seduce; to ourselves, whom we bereave of the best goods, and betray to the worst evils.

Beginning to live soberly, we begin to live like men, following the conduct of reason; beginning to live in charity, we commence the life of angels, enjoying in ourselves most sweet content, and procuring great benefit to others; but going on in sinful voluptuousness, we proceed to live like beasts, wholly guided by sense, and swayed by appetite; being pertinacious in malice, we continue to be like fiends, working torment in ourselves, and mischief to our neighbours.

Digitized by Google

Embracing virtue, we become wise and sober men, worthy and honourable, beneficial and useful to the world; but continuing in vice, we continue to be foolish and vain, to be vile and despicable, to be worthless and useless.

By our delay to amend, what do we gain? what, but a little flashy and transient pleasure, instead of a solid and durable peace; but a little counterfeit profit, instead of real wealth; but a little smoke of deceitful opinion, instead of unquestionably sound honour; shadows of imaginary goods, instead of those which are most substantial and true, a good mind, the love of God, the assured welfare of our souls. But this field of discourse is too spacious; I shall only therefore for conclusion say, that speedily applying ourselves to obedience, and breaking off our sins by repentance, is in effect nothing else but, from a present hell in trouble, and the danger of a final hell in torment, to be translated into a double heaven; one of joyful tranquillity here, another of blissful rest hereafter; unto the which Almighty God in his mercy bring us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. 1 Thess. v. 23.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLIV.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. IX. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

SERM. XLIV.

IN St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, among divers excellent rules of life, prescribed by that great master, this is one, Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροὶ, *Be not slothful in business*, or *to business*; and in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, among other principal virtues or worthy accomplishments, for abounding wherein the Apostle commendeth those Christians, he ranketh *All diligence*, πᾶσα σπουδὴ, or industry exercised in all affairs and duties incumbent on them: this is that virtue, the practice whereof, in this moral precept or advice, the royal Preacher doth recommend unto us; being indeed an eminent virtue, of very general use and powerful influence upon the management of all our affairs, or in the conduct of our whole life.

Rom. xii. 11.

2 Cor. viii. 7.

Industry, I say, in general, touching all matters incident, which our hand findeth to do, that is, which dispensation of Providence doth offer, or which choice of reason embraceth, for employing our active powers of soul and body, the Wise Man doth recommend; and to pressing the observance

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

of his advice (waving all nice reflexions, or curious remarks either critical or logical upon the words) I shall presently apply my discourse, proposing divers considerations apt to excite us thereto; only first, let me briefly describe it, for our better apprehension of its true notion and nature.

By industry we understand a serious and steady application of mind, joined with a vigorous exercise of our active faculties, in prosecution of any reasonable, honest, useful design, in order to the accomplishment or attainment of some considerable good; as, for instance, a merchant is industrious who continueth intent and active in driving on his trade for acquiring wealth; a soldier is industrious who is watchful for occasion, and earnest in action, toward obtaining the victory; and a scholar is industrious who doth assiduously bend his mind to study for getting knowledge.

Industry doth not consist merely in action; for that is incessant in all persons, our mind being a restless thing, never abiding in a total cessation from thought or from design[a]; (being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation somewhither.) But the direction of our mind to some good end, without roving or flinching, in a straight and steady course, drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry; the which therefore usually is attended with labour and pain;

[a] Ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ φύσιν ἔχουσα τοῦ κινεῖσθαι διαπαντὸς, οὐκ ἀνέχεται ἠρεμεῖν. Ἔμπρακτον τὸ ζῶον τοῦτο ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ κατὰ φύσιν αὐτῷ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐργάζεσθαι, παρὰ φύσιν δὲ τὸ ἀργεῖν.—Chrys. in Act. Orat. XXXV. [Opp. Tom. IV. p. 816.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

for our mind (which naturally doth affect variety and liberty, being apt to loathe familiar objects, and to be weary of any constraint) is not easily kept in a constant attention to the same thing; and the spirits employed in thought are prone to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix them: and the corporeal instruments of action being strained to a high pitch, or detained in a tone, will soon feel a lassitude somewhat offensive to nature; whence labour or pain is commonly reckoned an ingredient of industry, and laboriousness is a name signifying it; upon which account this virtue, as involving labour, deserveth a peculiar commendation; it being then most laudable to follow the dictates of reason, when so doing is attended with difficulty and trouble.

Such in general I conceive to be the nature of industry; to the practice whereof the following considerations may induce.

1 We may consider, that industry doth befit the constitution and frame of our nature; all the faculties of our soul and organs of our body being adapted in a congruity and tendency thereto: our hands are suited for work, our feet for travel, our senses to watch for occasion of pursuing good and eschewing evil, our reason to plod and contrive ways of employing the other parts and powers; all these, I say, are formed for action; and that not in a loose and gadding way, or in a slack and remiss degree, but, in regard to determinate ends, with vigour requisite to attain them; and especially our appetites do prompt to industry, as inclining to things not obtainable without it; according to that aphorism of the Wise Man, Ἐπιθυμίαι ὀκνηρὸν ἀπο-

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

Prov. xxi. 25; xiii. 4.

κτείνουσιν, *The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour;* that is, he is apt to desire things which he cannot attain without pains; and, not enduring them, he for want thereof doth feel a deadly smart and anguish: wherefore in not being industrious we defeat the intent of our Maker; we pervert his work and gifts; we forfeit the use and benefit of our faculties; we are bad husbands of nature's stock.

2 In consequence hereto industry doth preserve and perfect our nature, keeping it in good tune and temper, improving and advancing it toward its best state. The labour of our mind in attentive meditation and study doth render it capable and patient in thinking upon any object or occasion, doth polish and refine it by use, doth enlarge it by accession of habits, doth quicken and rouse our spirits, dilating and diffusing them into their proper channels. The very labour of our body doth keep the organs of action sound and clean, discussing fogs and superfluous humours, opening passages, distributing nourishment, exciting vital heat: barring the use of it, no good constitution of soul or body can subsist; but a foul rust, a dull numbness, a resty listlessness, a heavy unwieldiness must seize on us[b]; our spirits will be stifled and choked, our hearts will grow faint and languid, our parts will flag and decay; the vigour of our mind and the health of our body will be much impaired.

[b] Πάντα γαρ ἡ ἀργία βλάπτει, καὶ τὰ μέλη σώματος αὐτὰ βλάπτει πως ἡ ἀργία. &c.—Chrys. [ubi supra.]

Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τοῦ τοιούτου τὸ σῶμα αὐτὸ ἄλυτον, καὶ πεπλαδηκὸς, &c.—[Ibid. p. 809.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

It is with us as with other things in nature[c], which by motion are preserved in their native purity and perfection, in their sweetness, in their lustre; rest corrupting, debasing, and defiling them. If the water runneth, it holdeth clear, sweet, and fresh; but stagnation turneth it into a noisome puddle: if the air be fanned by winds, it is pure and wholesome; but from being shut up, it groweth thick and putrid: if metals be employed, they abide smooth and splendid; but lay them up, and they soon contract rust: if the earth be belaboured with culture, it yieldeth corn[d]; but, lying neglected, it will be overgrown with brakes and thistles[e]; and the better its soil is, the ranker weeds it will produce: all nature is upheld in its being, order, and state, by constant agitation; every creature is incessantly employed in action conformable to its designed end and use; in like manner the preservation and improvement of our faculties depends on their constant exercise.

3 As we naturally were composed, so by divine appointment we were originally designed for industry; God did not intend that man should live idly, even in his best state, or should enjoy happiness without taking pains; but did provide work enough even in Paradise itself; for *The Lord God*, saith the text, *took man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it;* so that had

Gen. ii. 15.

[c] Ποῖος ἵππος χρήσιμος, ὁ τρυφῶν, ἢ ὁ γυμναζόμενος; ποία ναῦς, ἡ πλέουσα, ἢ ἡ ἀργοῦσα; ποῖον ὕδωρ, τὸ τρέχον, ἢ τὸ ἑστώς; ποῖος σίδηρος, ὁ κείμενος, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος; &c.—Id. Ibid.

[d] Vid. Plut. de Liber. Educ. Opp. Tom. I. p. 3. Ed. Steph.

[e] Neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris.—
Hor. Sat. I. 3. [37.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

we continued happy, we must have been ever busy, by our industry sustaining our life, and securing our pleasure; otherwise weeds might have overgrown Paradise, and that of Solomon might have been applicable to Adam; *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof.* Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

4 By our transgression and fall the necessity of industry (together with a difficulty of obtaining good, and avoiding evil) was increased to us; being ordained both as a just punishment for our offences, and as an expedient remedy of our needs: for thereupon the ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles to us; and it was our doom pronounced by God's own mouth, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground:* so that now labour is fatally natural to us; now *Man,* as Job saith, *is born to labour, as the sparks fly upward,* (or, *as the vulture's chickens soar aloft,* according to the Greek interpreters[f].) Gen. iii. 17, 18. Gen. iii. 19. Job v. 7.

5 Accordingly our condition and circumstances in the world are so ordered, as to require industry; so that without it we cannot support our life in any comfort or convenience; whence St Paul's charge upon the Thessalonians, that *If any one would not work, neither should he eat,* is in a manner a general 2 Thess. iii. 10.

[f] Ἀλλ' ἄνθρωπος γεννᾶται κόπῳ, νεοσσοὶ δὲ γυπὸς τὰ ὑψηλὰ πέτονται.—LXX. Interp.

Great travail (as the son of Sirach saith) *is created for every man, and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, &c.* Ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, καὶ ζυγὸς βαρὺς ἐπὶ υἱοὺς Ἀδάμ.—Ecclus. xl. 1.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

law imposed on mankind by the exigency of our state, according to that of Solomon; *The idle soul shall suffer hunger*, and, *The sluggard, who will not plough by reason of the cold, shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.*

Prov. xix. 15; xx. 4.

Of all our many necessities, none can be supplied without pains, wherein all men are obliged to bear a share; every man is to work for his food, for his apparel, for all his accommodations, either immediately and directly, or by commutation and equivalence; for the gentleman himself cannot (at least worthily and inculpably) obtain them otherwise than by redeeming them from the ploughman and the artificer, by compensation of other cares and pains conducible to public good.

The wise poet did observe well when he said,

Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit[g].

And St Chrysostom doth propose the same observation, that God, to whet our mind[h], and keep us from moping, would not that we should easily come by the fruits of the earth, without employing much art and many pains; in order thereto there must be skill used in observing seasons, and preparing the ground; there must be labour spent in manuring, in delving, and ploughing; in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it; there must be pains taken in reaping, in gathering, in laying up, in threshing and dressing the fruit ere we can enjoy it; so much

[g] Virg. Georg. I. [121.]

[h] Διὰ τοῦτο εἰς ἀνάγκην ἡμᾶς κατέστησεν ἐργασίας ὁ Θεός, &c.— Chrys. in Act. Hom. XXXV. [Opp. Tom. IV. p. 810.]

Curis acuens mortalia corda;
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.—
Virg. Georg. I. [123.]

Digitized by Google

industry is needful to get bread: and if we list to fare more daintily, we must either hunt for it, using craft and toil to catch it out of the woods, the water, the air; or we must carefully wait on those creatures, of which we would serve ourselves, feeding them that they may feed us; such industry is required to preserve mankind from starving. And to guard it from other inconveniences, mischiefs, and dangers surrounding us, it is no less requisite: for to shelter us from impressions of weather, we must spin, we must weave, we must build; and in order thereto we must scrape into the bowels of the earth to find our tools; we must sweat at the anvil to forge them for our use; we must frame arms to defend our safety and our store from the assaults of wild beasts, or of more dangerous neighbours, wild men. To furnish accommodations for our curiosity and pleasure, or to provide for the convenience and ornament of our life, still greater measures of industry are demanded; to satisfy those intents, a thousand contrivances of art, a thousand ways of trade and business do serve, without which they are not attainable. In whatever condition any man is, in what state soever he be placed, whatsoever calling or way of life he doth embrace, some peculiar business is thence imposed on him, which he cannot, with any advantage or good success, with any grace, with any comfort to himself, or satisfaction to others, manage without competent industry: nothing will go on of itself, without our care to direct it, and our pains to hold it and forward it in the right course: all which things shew, that divine wisdom did intend that we should live in the exercise of industry, or not well without it; having

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

so many needs to be supplied, so many desires to be appeased thereby; being exposed to so many troubles and difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without it. But further yet,

6 Let us consider, that industry hath annexed thereto, by divine appointment and promise, the fairest fruits, and the richest rewards: all good things (being either such in themselves, or made such by human esteem) are the fruits of industry; ordered to sprout from it, under the protection and influence of God's blessing, which commonly doth attend it.

All good things, indeed, are the gifts of God, and freely dispensed by his hand; but he doth not give them absolutely without condition, nor miraculously without concurrence of ordinary means: by supporting our active powers, and supplying needful aid to our endeavours; by directing and upholding us in the course of our action; by preventing or removing obstacles that might cross us; by granting that final success which dependeth on his pleasure, he doth confer them on us[1]; our hand commonly is God's hand, by which he worketh good and reacheth our benefits to us; governing and wielding it as he pleaseth.

Ps. xxxvii. 3, 23. Prov. iii. 6.

Judg. vi. 36; vii. 7. 2 Kings v. 1. Josh. i. 9, 17.

God, indeed, could not well proceed otherwise in dispensing his favours to us; not well, I say; that is, not without subverting the method of things which himself hath established; not without slighting and voiding his own first bounty, or rendering the common gifts of nature (our reason, our senses, our active powers) vain and useless; not without

[1] Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.

Digitized by Google

making us incapable of any praise, or any reward[k], which suppose works achieved by our earnest endeavour; not without depriving us of that sweetest content, which springeth from enjoying the fruit of our labour.

Hence it is, that whatever in Holy Scripture is called the gift of God, is otherwhile affirmed to be the effect of industry; it being the useful condition upon which, and the instrument whereby, divine Providence conveyeth good things to us[l]: what God said to Joshua, doth imply the general method of his proceeding, *Only be thou strong and courageous—that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.* Josh. i. 7.

Hence whatever we are directed to pray for, we are also exhorted to work for[m]; declaring thereby, that we are serious in our devotion, and do not mock God, asking that of him which we deem not worth our pains to acquire. It was well said of Cato in Sallust, *Vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prospere omnia cedunt: ubi socordiæ te atque ignaviæ tradideris, nequicquam deos implores; irati, infestique sunt*[n]. We are bid to pray even for our daily bread, yet we may starve if we do not

[k] *Καί τινος ἔμελλες λαμβάνειν τὸν μισθὸν, εἰ τὸ πᾶν ἔμελλεν ἔσεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ.*—Chrys. in Eph. Orat. II. [?].

[l] *Ὁρᾷς ὅτι περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχὴ διάκειται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε; διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνους ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ, οἰκειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος.*—Id. in Joh. Hom. XXXVI. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 701.]

Διὰ τοῦτο οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἡμῶν ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἀφῆκέ τι ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα εὐπρόσωπον λάβῃ πρόφασιν τοῦ δικαίως ἡμᾶς στεφανοῦν.—Id. Or. XXVIII. Tom. V. [p. 173.]

[m] *Αὐτός τι νῦν δρῶν, εἶτα τοὺς θεοὺς κάλει.*—[Apud Suid. Tom. I. col. 666 B. Ed. Gaisford.]

Τὰν χεῖρα ποτιφέροντα δεῖ τὰν τύχαν καλεῖν.—Plut. Apoph. Lac. [Lac. Instit. Opp. Tom. VI. p. 888. Ed. Reisk.]

[n] [Sall. Bell. Cat. cap. LII.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

work for it; and in St Paul's judgment deserve to do so.

Hence we are bound to thank God for all those things, for the want of which we must thank ourselves, and condemn our own sloth.

Hence, although we should cast our care on God, and rely on his providence, being solicitous for nothing; yet we must not so trust him as to tempt him, by neglecting the means, which he doth offer, of relieving ourselves; to be presumptuously slothful being no less blameable, than to be distrustfully careful.

Hence God in all such cases, when we do need any good thing, is said to be our helper and succourer to the obtaining it; which doth imply that we must co-operate with him, and join our forces to those which he doth afford; so that as we can do nothing without him, so he will do nothing without us; yea, so that sometime we are said also to help God; *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* If ever God doth perform all without human labour conspiring, it is only in behalf of those who are ready to do their best, but unable to do any thing, being overpowered by the insuperable difficulty of things: but he never doth act miracles, or control nature; he never doth stretch forth his arm, or interpose special power, in favour of wilful and affected sluggards.

Judg. v. 23. Ps. lxxii. 12; xxii. 11. 2 Cor. xii. 10. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

In fine, it is very plain both in common experience, declaring the course of Providence, and in holy Scripture, expressing God's intention, that Almighty God doth hold forth all good things

Digitized by Google

as the prizes and recompenses of our vigilant care, and painful endeavour; as by surveying particulars we may clearly discern. SERM. XLIV.

Nothing is more grateful to men, than prosperous success in their undertakings, whereby they attain their ends, satisfy their desires, save their pains, and come off with credit; this commonly is the effect of industry°, (which commandeth fortune, to which all things submit and serve,) and scarce ever is found without it: an industrious person, who as such is not apt to attempt things impossible or unpracticable, can hardly fail of compassing his designs, because he will apply all means requisite, and bend all his forces thereto; striving to break through all difficulties, and to subdue all oppositions thwarting his purposes: but nothing of worth or weight can be achieved with half a mind, with a faint heart, with a lame endeavour: any enterprise undertaken without resolution, managed without care, prosecuted without vigour, will easily be dashed and prove abortive, ending in disappointment, damage, disgrace, and dissatisfaction: so the Wise Man doth assure us; *The soul,* saith he, *of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat:* the one pineth away with ineffectual and fruitless desires; the other thriveth upon satisfaction in prosperous success, yielding that issue of good report, which maketh the bones fat. Prov. xiii. 4; xxi. 25. xv. 30.

Plentiful accommodations for our sustenance and convenience all men will agree to be very

° Τῆς ἐπιμελείας δοῦλα πάντα γίγνεται.—Antiphanes. [Apud Stob. Flor. tit. XXIX. 51. Tom. II. p. 8. Ed. Gaisf.]

Quodcunque imperavit sibi animus, obtinuit. &c.—Sen. de Ira, II. 12. [7.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

desirable; and these are, indeed, the blessings of him, *Who visiteth the earth and enricheth it; Who crowneth the year with his goodness, and whose clouds drop fatness;* but they are so dispensed by Heaven, that industry must concur therewith in deriving them to us, and sloth will debar us of them; for *He,* saith the holy Oracle, *that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: and the thoughts of the diligent alone tend to plenteousness; but the sluggard shall beg in harvest, and have nothing; and the idle soul shall suffer hunger.*

Ps. lxv. 9, 11.

Prov. xii. 11; xxi. 5. (*deest in* LXX.) xx. 4; xix. 15.

Wealth is that which generally men of all things are wont to affect and covet with most ardent desire, as the great storehouse of their needs and conveniences, the sure bulwark of their state and dignity; the universal instrument of compassing their designs and pleasures; and most evident it is, that in the natural course of things, industry is the way to acquire it, to secure it, to improve and enlarge it; the which course pursued innocently and modestly, God will be so far from obstructing that he will further and bless it; for that, indeed, it would be a flaw in Providence, if honest industry, using the means it affordeth, should fail of procuring a competency; which joined with a pious contentedness, in St Paul's computation, is great wealth. Wherefore although Solomon telleth us, that, *The blessing of the Lord is that which maketh rich;* yet doth he not forget or contradict himself, when he also doth affirm, that, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich;* and that, *He who gathereth by labour shall increase;* because God blesseth the industrious, and by his own hand, as the most

1 Tim. vi. 6.

Prov. xv. 16; x. 22. xxii. 4; x. 4; xiii. 11.

Digitized by Google

proper instrument, maketh him rich[p]. When the Preacher said, *There is a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth,* he knew well enough what man it was, to whom God giveth them; and that sluggards were not fit objects of that liberality: for he had observed it to be their doom to be poor and beggarly, their nature to waste and embezzle an estate: he could assure us, that, *Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags;* he could propound it as a certain observation, that, *He who is slothful in his work is brother to a great waster;* or that want of industry in our business will no less impair our estate, than prodigality itself; and that, *He becometh poor who dealeth with a slack hand;* he could more than once warn the slothful, that if he did sleep on, or persist in his sluggish way, indigency would surprise, and seize on him with an insupportable violence: *So,* saith he, *shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

SERM. XLIV.

Eccles. vi. 2.

Prov. xxiii. 21; xviii. 9. x. 4. vi. 11; xxiv. 34.

Another darling of human affection (and a jewel, indeed, of considerable worth and use in our life) is honour, or reputation among men: this also plainly, after the common reason and course of things, is purchased and preserved by industry: for he that aspireth to worthy things, and assayeth laudable designs, pursuing them steadily with serious application of heart and resolute activity, will rarely fail of good success, and consequently will not miss honour, which ever doth crown victory; and if he should hap to fail in his design, yet he will not lose his credit; for having meant

[p] St Paul exhorteth to work with our own hands, Ἵνα μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε.—1 Thess. iv. 11, 12.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

well, and done his best, all will be ready to excuse, many to commend him; the very qualities which industry doth exercise, and the effects which it doth produce, do beget honour; as being ornaments of our person and state. God himself (from whom honour cometh, and whose special prerogative it is to bestow it, he, as King of the world, being the fountain of honour) will be concerned to dignify an industrious management of his gifts with that natural and proper recompense thereof; conducting him who fairly treadeth in the path of honour, that he shall safely arrive unto it. It is therefore a matter of easy observation, which the wise prince doth prompt us to mark; *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men:* that is, diligence, as it is the fairest, so it is the surest way to the best preferment: as it qualifieth a man for employment, and rendereth him useful to the world, so it will procure worthy employment for him, and attract the world to him; as the same great author again doth assert: *The hand,* saith he, *of the diligent shall bear rule;* yea, so honourable a thing is industry itself, that an exercise thereof in the meanest rank is productive of esteem, as the Wise Man again doth observe and tell us; *He that waiteth on his master* (that is, with diligence attendeth on the business committed to him) *shall be honoured*[q].

1 Chron. xxix. 12. Dan. v. 18. Eccles. v. 19.

Prov. xxii. 29.

xii. 24.

xxvii. 18.

No industrious man is contemptible; for he is ever looked upon as being in a way of thriving, of working himself out from any straits, of advancing himself into a better condition. But without industry we cannot expect any thing but disrespect,

[q] Ὁς φυλάσσει τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριον, τιμηθήσεται.—LXX.

Digitized by Google

shame, and reproach, which are the certain portion of the slothful; he not having the heart to enterprize, or the resolution and patience to achieve any thing deserving regard, or apt to procure it; he wanting all the ornaments and good fruits that grow from industry; he being only fit for a sordid and servile condition; whence, *The slothful*, saith Solomon, *shall be under tribute*[r]; and, *He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame;* he causeth it to his relations by his beggarly accoutrements, he causeth it much more to himself by his despicable faultiness, and by the disgraceful consequences of it. SERM. XLIV. Prov. xii. 24; x. 5.

Another yet more precious good, far surpassing all external advantages of our state; the which, in the judgment of him who (together with it having a full possession of all secular prosperity, wealth, dignity, and power) was best able to prize it, is better than rubies, and incomparably doth excel all things that may be desired, as ennobling, enriching, and embellishing our better part: wisdom, I mean, or a good comprehension and right judgment about matters of highest importance to us, is the prize of industry, and not to be gained without it; nature conferreth little thereto[s], fortune contributeth much less; it cannot be bought at any rate; *It cannot*, saith Job, *be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire;* it is the offspring of watchful observation and experience, of serious meditation and viii. 11; iii. 14, 15; iv. 7. Job xxviii. 18. xxviii. 15, 16.

[r] Δῶλοι δὲ ἔσονται ἐν προνομῇ.—LXX.

[s] Nec rude quid possit video ingenium.—
Hor. de Arte Poet. [410.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

study; of careful reflection on things, marking, comparing, and weighing their nature, their worth, their tendencies and consequences; these are needful to the getting of wisdom, because truth, which it seeketh, commonly doth not lie in the surface, obvious to a superficial glance, nor only dependeth on a simple consideration of few things; but is lodged deep in the bowels of things, and under a knotty complication of various matters; so that we must dig to come at it, and labour in unfolding it: nor is it an easy task to void the prejudices springing from inclination or temper, from education or custom, from passion and interest, which cloud the mind, and obstruct the attainment of wisdom.

If we will have it, we must get it as Solomon himself did, that great master of it. How was that? *I gave*, saith he, *my heart to know wisdom.* He who made it his option and choice before all things; who so earnestly and so happily did pray for it; upon whom it is so expressly said, that God in a special manner and plentiful measure did bestow it; who averreth God to be the sole donor of it, (for, *The Lord*, saith he, *giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding;*) yet even he did first give his heart to it before it was given into his heart: he did not only gape for it, to receive it by mere infusion; but he worked and studied hard for it. He was, indeed, a great student, an inquisitive searcher into nature, a curious observer of the world, a profound considerer and comparer of things; and by that industrious course, promoted by divine blessing, he did arrive to that great stock of so renowned a wisdom.

Eccles. i. 17; ii. 3. 1 Kings iii. 9; iv. 29. Wisd. viii. 21; ix. 17. Eccles. ii. 26. James i. 5. Prov. ii. 6.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

And the same method it is which he prescribeth to us for getting it; exhorting us, that, *We incline our ear unto wisdom, and apply our heart to understanding;* that, *We cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding;* that, *We seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;* in following which course he doth assure us of good success; for, *Then,* saith he, *shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God,* which is the head or chief part of wisdom; and, *Blessed,* saith he again, in the person and place of wisdom itself, *is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For he that findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.* It is the way he supposeth of finding wisdom, to watch assiduously, to wait diligently upon the means of attaining her; and how infallible the acquist of her is thereby, she doth again by his mouth thus acquaint us; *I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me;* and, *She,* saith his imitator, *is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her: whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travail: for he shall find her sitting at his doors.*

Prov. ii. 2, 3, 4.

viii. 34, 35.

viii. 17.

Wisd. vi. 12, 13, 14.

This, indeed, is the only way; idleness is not capable of so rich and noble a purchase: a slothful person may be conceited, yea needs must be so; but he can never be wise: *A sluggard,* saith Solomon, *is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason;* this wisdom is a natural issue of his ignorance; and it is, indeed, no small part of his folly that he doth not perceive it; being no less stupid in reflection on his own mind, than in considering other matters: being always in a

Prov. xxvi. 16.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

slumber, he will often fall into such pleasant dreams; and no wonder that he should presume upon abundance of knowledge, who not listing to take any pains in the search or discussion of things, doth snatch the first appearances, doth embrace every suggestion of his fancy, every conceit gratifying his humour, for truth.

What should I speak of learning, or the knowledge of various things, transcending vulgar apprehension? Who knoweth not that we cannot otherwise reach any part of that, than by assiduous study and contemplation? Who doth not find that all the power in the world is not able to command, nor all the wealth of the Indies to purchase, one notion? Who can be ignorant that no wit alone or strength of parts can suffice, without great industry, to frame any science, to learn any one tongue, to know the history of Nature or of Providence? It is certainly by Horace's method,

Multa tulit fecitque puer[t],

by much exercise and endurance of pains, that any one can arrive to the mark of being learned or skilful in any sort of knowledge.

But further yet, virtue, the noblest endowment and richest possession whereof man is capable; the glory of our nature, the beauty of our soul, the goodliest ornament and the firmest support of our life[u]; that also is the fruit and blessing of industry;

[t] Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit.—
Hor. de Art. Poet. [412.]

[u] Τῇ μὲν κακίᾳ ἡδονὴ, τῇ δὲ ἀρετῇ συγκεκλήρωται πόνος.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. XXXVI. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 701.]
Κακία μὲν γὰρ αὐτοδίδακτον· ἀρετὴ δὲ σὺν πόνῳ κτᾶται.—
Cf. Sen. de Provid. cap. II.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

that of all things most indispensably doth need and require it. It doth not grow in us by nature, nor befall us by fortune; for nature is so far from producing it, that it yieldeth mighty obstacles and resistances to its birth, there being in the best dispositions much averseness from good, and great proneness to evil; fortune doth not further its acquists, but casteth in rubs and hindrances thereto, every condition presenting its allurements or its affrightments from it; all things within us and about us conspire to render its production and its practice laborious.

It is ('tis true) a gift of Heaven, and cannot be obtained without a special influence of divine grace; but it is given as children are, (of whom it is said, *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward,*) not without sore travail and labour of the mother, not without grievous difficulty and pangs in the birth. In our conversion to embrace virtue God doth guide us; but to what? to sit still? No, to walk, to run in his ways: grace doth move us, but whereto? to do nothing? No, but to stir, and act vigorously; *The Holy Spirit doth help,* συναντιλαμβάνεται, *our infirmities:* but how could it help them, if we did not conjoin our best, though weak, endeavours with its operations? To what doth it συναντιλαμβάνειν, or *co-help* us, but to strive against sin, to work righteousness, to perform duty with earnest intention of mind, and laborious activity? *God,* saith St Chrysostom, *hath parted virtue with us, and neither hath left all to be in us, lest we should be elated to pride, nor himself hath taken all, lest we should decline to sloth*[x].

Ps. cxxvii. 3.

Rom. viii. 26.

Heb. xii. 4. Rom. ii. 10. Acts x. 35.

[x] Ἐμερίσατο γὰρ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀρετὴν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ οὔτε ἐφ' ἡμῖν

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

Indeed, the very nature and essence of virtue doth consist in the most difficult and painful efforts of soul; in the extirpating rooted prejudices and notions from our understanding; in bending a stiff will, and rectifying crooked inclinations; in overruling a rebellious temper; in curbing eager and importunate appetites; in taming wild passions; in withstanding violent temptations; in surmounting many difficulties, and sustaining many troubles; in struggling with various unruly lusts within, and encountering many stout enemies abroad, which assault our reason, and, *War against our soul:* in such exercises its very being lieth; its birth, its growth, its subsistence dependeth on them; so that from any discontinuance or remission of them it would soon decay, languish away, and perish.

1 Pet. ii. 11.

What attention, what circumspection, and vigilancy of mind, what intention of spirit, what force of resolution, what command and care over ourselves doth it require, to keep our hearts from vain thoughts and evil desires; to guard our tongue from wanton, unjust, uncharitable discourse; to order our steps uprightly and steadily in all the paths of duty? Καὶ *τί οὐκ ἐπίπονον τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς; And what,* as St Chrysostom asketh, *of all things belonging to virtue is not laborious*[y]*?* It is no small

ἀφῆκε τὸ πᾶν εἶναι, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἀπόνοιαν ἐπαιρώμεθα, οὔτε αὐτὸς τὸ πᾶν ἔλαβεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ῥᾳθυμίαν ἀποκλίνωμεν· &c.—Chrys. Or. XXVIII. Opp. Tom. V. [p. 173.]

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ περὶ τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγχείρησις δίχα τῆς ἄνωθεν βοηθείας τελειωθήσεται· οὐδὲ ἡ ἄνωθεν χάρις ἐπὶ τὸν μὴ σπουδάζοντα παραγένοιτ' ἄν. ἀλλ' ἑκάτερα συγκεκρᾶσθαι προσήκει, σπουδήν τε ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ τὴν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἄνωθεν καθήκουσαν συμμαχίαν εἰς τελείωσιν ἀρετῆς.—Bas. Const. Mon. cap. XV. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 558.]

[y] Chrys. in Joh. Hom. XXXVI. [Tom. II. p. 701.]

Digitized by Google

task to know it, wherein it consisteth, and what it demandeth of us; it is a far more painful thing to conform our practice unto its rules and dictates. SERM. XLIV.

If travelling in a rough way; if climbing up a steep hill; if combating stern foes, and fighting sharp battles; if crossing the grain of our nature and desires; if continually holding a strict rein over all our parts and powers, be things of labour and trouble, then greatly such is the practice of virtue[z].

Indeed, each virtue hath its peculiar difficulty, needing much labour to master it: *Faith* is called ἔργον πίστεως, *the work of faith;* and it is no such easy work, as may be imagined, to bring our hearts unto a thorough persuasion about truths crossing our sensual conceits, and controlling our peevish humours; unto a perfect submission of our understanding, and resignation of our will to whatever God teacheth or prescribeth; to a firm resolution of adhering to that profession, which exacteth of us so much pains, and exposeth us to so many troubles. 1 Thess. i. 3. 2 Thess. i. 11. John vi. 29.

Charity is also a laborious exercise of many good works; and he that will practise it must in divers ways labour hardly; he must labour in voiding from his soul many dispositions deeply radicated therein by nature, opinion, and custom; envy, frowardness, stubbornness, perverse and vain selfishness; from whence wrath, revenge, spite, and malice do spring forth. He must labour in effectual Gal. vi. 10.

[z] Τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
Ἀθάνατοι· μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐς αὐτὴν,
Καὶ τρηχὺς τοπρῶτον.—
Hes. [Op. et Di. 289.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

performance of all good offices, and in catching all occasions of doing good; he must exert that Κόπον ἀγάπης, that *Labour of love*, whereof St Paul doth speak; he must (as that holy Apostle directeth, not only in precept, but by his own practice) work with his own hands, that he may supply the wants of his neighbour.

1 Thess. i. 3. Heb. vi. 10. Eph. iv. 28. Acts xx. 35.

Hope itself (which one would think, when grounded well, should be a no less easy than pleasant duty) doth need much labour to preserve it safe, straight, and stable, among the many waves and billows of temptation assaying to shake and subvert it; whence a *Patience of hope* is recommended to us; and we so often are exhorted to hold it fast, to keep it sure, firm, and unshaken to the end.

Heb. vi. 19; x. 23. 1 Thess. i. 3. Heb. x. 36; vi. 11; iii. 6, 14. 2 Pet. i. 10.

Temperance also surely demandeth no small pains[a]; it being no slight business to check our greedy appetites, to shun the enticements of pleasure, to escape the snares of company and example, to support the ill-will and reproaches of those zealots and bigots for vice, who cannot tolerate any nonconformity to their extravagances; but, as St Peter doth express it, *Think it strange, if others do not run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking ill of them for it.*

1 Pet. iv. 4.

What should I speak of meekness, of patience, of humility, of contentedness? Is it not manifest how laborious those virtues are, and what pains are necessary in the obtaining, in the exercise of them? what pains, I say, they require in the

[a] Πάντες γὰρ ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ὑμνοῦσιν, ὡς καλὸν μὲν ἡ σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη, χαλεπὸν μέντοι καὶ ἐπίπονον.—Plat. de Rep. II. [364 A.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

voidance of fond conceits, in the suppression of froward humours, in the quelling fierce passions, in the brooking grievous crosses and adversities, in the bearing heinous injuries and affronts.

Thus doth all virtue require much industry, and it therefore necessarily must itself be a great virtue, which is the mother, the nurse, the guardian of all virtues; yea, which, indeed, is an ingredient and constitutive part of every virtue; for if virtue were easily obtainable or practicable without a good measure of pains, how could it be virtue? What excellency could it have, what praise could it claim, what reward could it expect? God hath, indeed, made the best things not easily obtainable, hath set them high out of our reach, to exercise our industry in getting them, that we might raise up ourselves to them, that being obtained, they may the more deserve our esteem, and his reward.

Lastly, The sovereign good, the last scope of our actions, the top and sum of our desires, happiness itself, or eternal life in perfect rest, joy, and glory; although it be the supreme gift of God, and special boon of divine grace, (Τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *But*, saith St Paul, *the gift of God's grace is eternal life;*) yet it also by God himself is declared to be the result and reward of industry; for we are commanded, *To work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, and, *To give diligence in making our calling and election sure*, by virtuous practice; and *God*, saith St Paul, *will render to every man according to his works; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life;* and, in the close of God's book, it is proclaimed, as a truth of greatest

Rom. vi. 23. Eph. ii. 8. Phil. ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 10. Rom. ii. 6, 7, 10; vi. 22.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIV.

moment, and special point of God's will, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.* It is plainly industry, which climbeth the holy mount; it is industry, which taketh the kingdom of heaven by force; it is industry, which so runneth as to obtain the prize, which so fighteth as to receive the crown, which so watcheth as to secure our everlasting interest to us.

Rev. xxii. 14. Heb. xii. 23. Matt. xi. 12. 1 Cor. ix. 24. James i. 12. Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13. Luke xii. 37. Rev. iii. 3.

Thus do the choicest good things, of which we are capable, spring from industry, or depend upon it; and no considerable good can be attained without it: thus all the gifts of God are by it conveyed to us, or are rendered in effect beneficial to us; for the gifts of nature are but capacities which it improveth; the gifts of fortune or providence are but instruments, which it employeth to our use; the gifts of grace are the supports and succours of it; and the very gift of glory is its fruit and recompense.

There are, further, several other material considerations and weighty motives to the practice of this duty, which meditation hath suggested to me: but these, in regard to your patience, must suffice at present; the other (together with an application proper to our condition and calling) being reserved to another occasion.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLV.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. IX. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

INDUSTRY, which the divine Preacher in this text recommendeth to us, is a virtue of a very diffusive nature and influence; stretching itself through all our affairs, and twisting itself with every concern we have; so that no business can be well managed, no design accomplished, no good obtained without it: it therefore behoveth us to conceive a high opinion of it, and to inure our souls to the practice of it, upon all occasions: in furtherance of which purposes I formerly, not long since, did propound several motives and inducements; and now proceeding on, shall represent divers other considerations serviceable to the same end. SERM. XLV.

1 We may consider, that industry is productive of ease itself, and preventive of trouble: it was no less solidly, than acutely and smartly advised by the philosopher Crates, *Whether*, said he, *labour be to be chosen, labour; or whether it be to be eschewed, labour, that thou mayest not labour; for by not labouring, labour is not escaped, but is rather*

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

pursued[a]; and St Chrysostom doth upon the same consideration urge industry, because, *Sloth*, saith he, *is wont to spoil us, and to yield us much pain*[b]. No man can cozen nature, escaping the labour to which he was born; but rather attempting it, will delude himself, then finding most, when he shunneth all labour.

Sloth, indeed, doth affect ease and quiet, but by affecting them doth lose them; it hateth labour and trouble, but by hating them doth incur them; it is a self-destroying vice, not suffering those who cherish it to be idle, but creating much work, and multiplying pains unto them; engaging them into divers necessities and straits, which they cannot support with ease, and out of which, without extreme trouble, they cannot extricate themselves: of this the Preacher doth afford us a plain instance;

Eccles. x. 18. *By much slothfulness*, saith he, *the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.* A little care taken at first about repairing the house, would have saved its decay and ruin, and consequently the vast charge and trouble, becoming needful to re-edify it: and the like doth happen in most other cases and occurrences of life: idleness commonly doth let slip opportunities and advantages, which cannot with ease be retrieved; it letteth things fall into a bad case, out of which they can hardly be recovered.

[a] Εἶθ' αἱρετὸν ὁ πόνος πόνει· εἶτε φευκτὸν, πόνει, ἵνα μὴ πονῇς· διὰ γὰρ τοῦ μὴ πόνειν οὐ φεύγεται πόνος, τῷ δὲ ἐναντίῳ καὶ διώκεται.—Crates, Ep. IV. [Variorum Epistolæ. Aldus. 1499.]

[b] Ἡ ἀργία διαφθείρειν ἡμᾶς εἴωθε καὶ πολὺν παρέχειν τὸν πόνον.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. XXXVI. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 701.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

The certain consequences of it (disgrace, penury, want of experience, disobliging and losing friends, with all the like mischiefs) cannot be supported without much disquiet; and they disable a man from redressing the inconveniences into which he is plunged.

But industry, by a little voluntary labour taken in due place and season, doth save much necessary labour afterward, and by moderate care doth prevent intolerable distress; and the fruits of it (wealth, reputation, skill, and dexterity in affairs, friendships, all advantages of fortune) do enable a man to pass his life with great ease, comfort, and delight.

2 Industry doth beget ease, by procuring good habits, and facility of acting things expedient for us to do. By taking pains to-day we shall need less pains to-morrow; and by continuing the exercise, within a while we shall need no pains at all, but perform the most difficult tasks of duty, or of benefit to us, with perfect ease, yea commonly with great pleasure. What sluggish people account hard and irksome (as to rise early, to hold close to study or business, to bear some hardship) will be natural and sweet; as proceeding from another nature, raised in us by use.

Industry doth breed assurance and courage, needful for the undertaking and prosecution of all necessary business, or for the performance of all duties incumbent on us.

No man can quite decline business, or disengage himself from duty, without infinite damage and mischief accruing to himself: but these an industrious man (confiding in this efficacious quality) will set upon with alacrity, and despatch with

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

facility, his diligence voiding obstacles, and smoothing the way to him; whenas idleness, finding some difficulties, and fancying more, soon disheartened, and causeth a man to desist from action, rather choosing to crouch under the burden, than, by endeavour to carry it through, to discharge himself thereof: whence as to an industrious man things seeming difficult will prove easy, so to a slothful person the easiest things will appear impossible; according to Solomon's observation: *The way*, saith he, *of a slothful man*[c] *is an hedge of thorns, but the way of the upright is made plain;* where, as a slothful man, being apt to neglect his obligations, is opposed to an upright man, who hath a conscionable regard to them, and is willing to take pains in the discharge of them; so it is declared, that to the one the way is rough and spinose, to the other beaten and expedite.

Prov. xv. 19.

And again, *The slothful man*, saith he, *doth say, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets*[d]: he is very apt to conceit, or to pretend imaginary difficulties and hazards, and thence to be deterred from going about his business, or doing his duty. This consideration St Chrysostom doth propose, exciting to an earnest pursuit of virtue; because, *There is*, saith he, *nothing so easy, which our great sloth doth not represent very grievous and burdensome; nothing so painful and difficult, which diligence and willingness do not shew to be very easy*[e].

xxii. 13; xxvi. 13.

[c] עצל. Ὁδοὶ ἀεργῶν ἐστρωμέναι ἀκάνθαις, αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρείων τετριμμέναι.—LXX.

[d] Προφασίζεται καὶ λέγει ὀκνηρὸς, Λέων ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πλατείαις φονευταί.—LXX.

[e] Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἐστὶ ῥᾴδιον, ὁ μὴ σφόδρα βαρὺ καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ὁ πολὺς

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

3 We may consider, that industry will sweeten all our enjoyments, and season them with a grateful relish; for as no man can well enjoy himself, or find sound content in any thing, while business or duty lie unfinished on his hand; so when he hath done his best toward the despatch of his work, he will then comfortably take his ease, and enjoy his pleasure; then his food doth taste savourily, then his divertisements and recreations have a lively gustfulness, then his sleep is very sound and pleasant, according to that of the Preacher, *The sleep of a labouring man*[f] *is sweet.* Eccles. v. 12.

4 Especially those accommodations prove most delightful, which our industry hath procured to us; we looking on them with a special tenderness of affection, as on the children of our endeavour; we being sensible at what costs of care and pain we did purchase them[g]. If a man getteth wealth by fraud or violence, if he riseth to preferment by flattery, detraction, or any bad arts, he can never taste any good savour, or find sound comfort in them; and from what cometh merely by chance, as there is no commendation due, so much satisfaction will not arise. It is the Wise Man's observation, *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting,* and therefore it cannot be very grateful to him; but, addeth he, *The substance of a diligent man is precious;* that is, what a man compasseth Prov. xii. 27.

δείκνυσιν ὅκνος ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐπίπονον καὶ δυσχερὲς, ὁ μὴ λίαν εὔχολον ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ἡ προθυμία.—Chrys. ad Dem. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 144.]

Τὰ μὲν ῥᾴδια τοὺς ἀμελοῦντας φεύγει, τὰ δὲ χαλεπὰ ταῖς ἐπιμελείαις ἁλίσκεται —Plut. de Liber. Educ. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 5. Ed. Reisk.]

[f] Τοῦ δούλου.—LXX.

[g] Cui sit conditio dulcis sine pulvere palmæ?—
Hor. Ep. I. 1. [51.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

by honest industry, that he is apt highly to prize; he triumpheth in it, and (in St Paul's sense innocently) boasteth of it; he feeleth a solid pleasure and a pure complacency therein: the manner of getting it doth more please him than the thing itself; as true hunters do love the sport more than the quarry, and generous warriors more rejoice in the victory than in the spoil; for, *Our soul,* as St Chrysostom discourseth, *is more affected with those things, for which it hath laboured; for which reason,* addeth he, *God hath mixed labours with virtue itself, that he might endear it to us*[h]. Yea further,

1 Cor. ix. 15.

5 The very exercise of industry immediately in itself is delightful, and hath an innate satisfaction, which tempereth all annoyances, and even ingratiateth the pains going with it.

The very settlement of our mind on fit objects, or its acquiescence in determinate action conducing to a good end, whereby we are freed of doubt, distraction, and fastidious listlessness, doth minister content. The reflection upon our having embraced a wise choice, our proceeding in a fair way, our being in chase of a good purpose, doth breed complacence. To consider that we are spending our time accountably, and improving our talents to good advantage, (to the service of God, the benefit of our neighbour, the bettering of our own state,) is very cheering and comfortable. And whereas, *In all labour,* as the Wise Man telleth us, *there is profit,* the foresight of that profit affordeth pleasure,

Prov. xiv. 23.

[h] Περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχὴ διακείται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνους ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ οἰκειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. XXXVI. [Tom. II. p. 701.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

the foretasting the good fruits of our industry is very delicious. Hope, indeed, doth ever wait on industry: and what is more delightful than hope? This is the incentive, the support, the condiment of all honest labour[1]; in virtue whereof the husbandman toileth, the merchant trudgeth, the scholar ploddeth, the soldier dareth with alacrity and courage, not resenting any pains, not regarding any hazards, which attend their undertakings: this the holy Apostles tell us did enable them with joy to sustain all their painful work and hazardous warfare; enjoining us also as to work with fear, so to rejoice in hope.

1 Cor. ix. 10. Heb. iii. 6. 1 Tim. iv. 10. Col. i. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 12. 1 John iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3. Tit. ii. 13. Phil. ii. 12. Rom. xii. 12.

In fine, industry doth free us from great displeasure, by redeeming us from the molestations of idleness, which is the most tedious and irksome thing in the world, racking our soul with anxious suspense and perplexing distraction[k]; starving it for want of satisfactory entertainment, or causing it to feed on its own heart by doleful considerations; infesting it with crowds of frivolous, melancholic, troublesome, stinging thoughts; galling it with a sense of our squandering away precious time, of our slipping fair opportunities, of our not using the abilities and advantages granted us, to any profit or fruit: whence St Chrysostom saith very truly, *What is there more unpleasant, more painful,*

[1] Ipsa operis difficultate lætus, spem segetis de labore metitur. —Apud Aug. Ep. CXLII [ad Demet. Opp. Tom. II. App. col. 17.]

[k] Otio qui nescit uti, plus negoti habet,
Quam cum est negotium in negotio.
* * * * *
Otioso in otio animus nescit, quid velit.—
Ennius [Iphig. Frag. IV.] apud Aul. Gell. XIX. 10.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

more miserable, than a man that hath nothing to do? Is not this, saith he, *worse than ten thousand chains, to hang in suspense, and be continually gaping, looking on those who are present*[l]*?* Indeed the strictest imprisonment is far more tolerable, than being under restraint by a lazy humour from profitable employment: this enchaineth a man hand and foot with more than iron fetters: this is beyond any imprisonment; it is the very entombment of a man[m], quite in effect sequestering him from the world, or debarring him from any valuable concerns therein. And if liberty be, Ἐξουσία αὐτοπραγίας, *A power of doing what one liketh best*[n]; then is he, who by his sloth is disabled from doing any thing, wherein he can find any reasonable satisfaction, the veriest slave that can be; from which slavery industry freeing us, and disposing us to perform cheerfully whatever is convenient, thereby doeth us a great pleasure. Further,

6 Let us consider, that industry doth afford a lasting comfort, deposited in the memory and conscience of him that practiseth it. It will ever, upon his reviewing the passages of his life, be sweet to him to behold in them testimonies and monuments of his diligence; it will please him to consider, that he hath lived to purpose, having done somewhat considerable; that he hath made

[l] Καὶ τί ἀηδέστερον γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν ἔχοντος ποιεῖν; τί μοχθηρότερον; τί ταλαιπωρότερον; μυρίων οὐ χεῖρον τοῦτο δεσμῶν, χασμάσθαι καὶ κεχήνεναι διαπαντὸς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καθήμενον, ὁρῶντα τοὺς παριόντας;—Chrys. in Act. Or. XXXV. [Opp. Tom. IV. p. 810.]

[m] Otium [sine literis mors] est [et] vivi hominis sepultura.—[Sen. Ep. LXXXII.]

[n] [Εἶναι γὰρ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἐξουσίαν αὐτοπραγίας.—Diog. Laert. (Vit. Zenon.) VII. I. 64.]

Digitized by Google

an advantageous use of his time; that he hath well husbanded the talents committed to him; that he hath accomplished (in some measure) the intents of God's bounty, and made some return for his excellent gifts. What comfort, indeed, can any man have, yea, how sore remorse must he feel, in reflecting upon a life spent in unfruitful and unprofitable idleness? How can he otherwise than bewail his folly and baseness in having lived (or rather having only been[o]) in vain; as the shadow and appearance of a man; in having lavished his days, in having buried his talents, in having embezzled his faculties of nature, and his advantages from Providence; in having defeated the good-will of God, and endeavoured no requital to the munificent goodness of his Maker, of his Preserver, his benign Lord and Master, his gracious Saviour and Redeemer? How, without confusion, can he in his mind revolve, that he hath nowise benefited the world, and profited his neighbour, or obliged his friends, or rendered to his country (to the society or community of which he is a member) amends for all the safety and quiet, the support, the convenience, and the pleasure he hath enjoyed under its protection, and in its bosom? that he hath not borne a competent share in the common burdens, or paid a due contribution of his care and labour to the public welfare? How can such a man look inward upon himself with a favourable eye, or pardon himself for so loathsome defaults?

SERM. XLV.

Matt. xxv. 26.

7 Let us consider, that industry doth argue a generous and ingenuous complexion of soul.

It implieth a mind not content with mean and

[o] Diu fuit, non diu vixit.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

vulgar things, (such as nature dealeth to all, or fortune scattereth about,) but aspiring to things of high worth, and pursuing them in a brave way, with adventurous courage, by its own forces, through difficulties and obstacles.

It signifieth in a man a heart, not enduring to owe the sustenance or convenience of his life to the labour or the liberality of others; to pilfer a livelihood from the world; to reap the benefit of other men's care and toil, without rendering a full compensation, or outdoing his private obligations by considerable service and beneficence to the public. A noble heart will disdain to subsist like a drone upon the honey gathered by others' labour; like a vermin to filch its food out of the public granary; or like a shark to prey on the lesser fry; but will one way or other earn his subsistence: for he that doth not earn, can hardly own his bread, as St

2 Thess. iii. 12. Paul implieth, when he saith, *Them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread,* τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον.

Of this generous ingenuity we have a notable

1 Cor. ix. 15. instance in that great Apostle himself; which he doth often represent as a pattern to us, professing much complacence therein. He with all right and

2 Thess. iii. 9. reason might have challenged a comfortable subsis-

1 Cor. ix. 11. tence from his disciples, in recompense for the

1 Thess. ii. 6. incomparable benefits he did confer on them, and of the excessive pains he did endure for their good: this he knew well; but yet did rather choose to support himself by his own labour, than anywise to

Acts xx. 34, 35; xviii. 3. seem burdensome or troublesome to them: *These hands,* said he, *have ministered to my necessities,*

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

and to them that are with me. I have shewed you all things, that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. This was the practice of him, who was in labours most abundant; and such is the genius of every man, who upon principles of conscience, reason, and honour, is industrious. Of him it may be said, as of Solomon's good housewife, *She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; she is like the merchants' ship, she bringeth her food from afar; she looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*

1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 2 Cor. xi. 9; xi. 23. Prov. xxxi. 13, 14, 27.

Sloth is a base quality, the argument of a mind wretchedly degenerate and mean; which is content to grovel in a despicable state; which aimeth at no worthy thing, nor pursueth any thing in a laudable way; which disposeth a man to live *gratis* (precariously) and ingratefully on the public stock, as an insignificant cipher among men, as a burden of the earth, as a wen of any society; sucking aliment from it, but yielding no benefit or ornament thereto.

8 Industry is a fence to innocence and virtue; a bar to all kinds of sin and vice, guarding the avenues of our heart, keeping off the occasions and temptations to vicious practice. When a man is engaged in honest employment, and seriously intent thereon, his mind is prepossessed and filled, so that there is no room or vacancy for ill thoughts or base designs to creep in; his senses do not lie open to ensnaring objects; he wants leisure and opportunity of granting audience to the solicitations of sinful pleasure; and is apt to answer them with a

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

non vacat; the Devil can hardly find advantage of tempting him[p], at least many devils cannot get access to him, according to that observation in Cassian, *A working monk is assaulted by one devil, but an idle one is spoiled by numberless bad spirits*[q]. The case of men ordinarily is like to that of Ægisthus,

Ne nil ageretur, amavit[r];

rather than do nothing, he was ready to do ill; he not having business to employ his thoughts, wanton desires did insinuate themselves into his heart, and transported him to that disastrous wickedness, which supplied matter to so many tragedies; and the like instance the Sacred History suggesteth in king David, who, walking, it is said, on the roof of his house, his mind then roving, and being untacked from honest cares, that temptation seized on him, whereby he was plunged into that woful misdemeanour, which did create to him so much sorrow, did make such a spot in his life, and leave such a blur on his memory; whence yet we may draw some benefit, taking it as a profitable document and warning, how idleness doth expose the best men to danger.

2 Sam. xi. 2.

Idleness is, indeed, the nursery of sins, which as naturally grow up therein as weeds in a neglected field, or insects in a standing puddle; *Idleness teacheth much evil.* It is the general trap, whereby

Ecclus. xxxiii. 27.

[p] Semper te diabolus inveniat occupatum.—Bern. Form. Honest. Vitæ. v. [Opp. Tom. v. fol. 296. col. 2.]

[q] [Hæc est apud Ægyptum ab antiquis patribus sancita sententia,] operantem monachum dæmone uno pulsari: otiosum vero innumeris spiritibus devastari.—Cass. de Instit. x. 23. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 434.]

[r] Ovid. Rem. Am. [167.]

Digitized by Google

every tempter assayeth to catch our soul: for the mind being loose from care, Satan is ready to step in with his suggestions, the world presenteth its allurements, fleshly desires rise up; proud, froward, wanton cogitations slip in; ill company doth entice, ill example is regarded, every temptation doth object and impress itself with great advantage and force; men in such a case being apt to close and comply with temptations, even to divert their mind and entertain themselves, to cure their listlessness, to pass their time, committing sin for want of better occupation[s]. Hence in places where there is least work, the worst sins do most prevail; and idleness therefore was by the Prophet reckoned one of the three great sins of Sodom, parents of the rest: *Behold,* saith Ezekiel, *this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her:* hence it seldom doth happen in any way of life, that a sluggard and a rakehell do not go together; or that he who is idle is not also dissolute. SERM. XLV. Ezek. xvi. 49.

9 Particularly industry doth prevent the sins of vain curiosity, pragmaticalness, troublesome impertinency, and the like pests of common life, into which persons not diligently following their own business will assuredly fall. *We hear,* saith St Paul to the Thessalonians, *that there are some who walk among you disorderly; working not at all, but are busybodies*[t]. It is no wonder, if they did not

[s] Si non
Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis,
Invidia vel amore vigil torquebere.—
Hor. Ep. I. 2. [35.]

[t] Μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους, *Working nothing but over-working.*—2 Thess. iii. 11.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

work at all, that they should walk disorderly; or that quite neglecting their own concerns, they should περιεργάζεσθαι, *over-work*, or be too busy in matters not belonging to them, intruding themselves into the affairs of their neighbours: for there is a natural connection between these things; since every man must be thinking, must be doing, must be saying somewhat, to spend his leisure, to uphold conversation, to please himself, and gratify others, to appear somebody among his companions; to avoid the shame of being quite out of employment; wherefore not having the heart to mind his own affairs, he will take the boldness to meddle with the concerns of other men; if he cannot have the substance, he will set up an idol of business, and seem very active in his impertinency; in order thereto, being curiously inquisitive, and prying into the discourse, actions, and affairs of all men. This men are apt to do in their own defence: and besides, idleness doth put men into a loose, garish, wanton humour, disposing them without heed or regard to meddle with any thing, to prattle at any rate. In fine, whoever hath no work at home, will be gadding to seek entertainment abroad, like those gossips of whom St Paul saith, *They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* If, indeed, we consider all the frivolous and petulant discourse, the impertinent chattings, the rash censures, the spiteful detractions which are so rife in the world, and so much poison all conversation, we shall find the main root of them to be a want of industry in men, or of diligent attendance on their own matters;

1 Tim. v. 13.

Digitized by Google

which would so much take up their spirit and time, that they would have little heart or leisure to search into or comment upon other men's actions and concerns. SERM. XLV.

10 Let us consider, that industry is needful in every condition and station, in every calling and way of life: in all relations, for our good behaviour, and right discharge of our duty in them. Without it we cannot in any state act decently or usefully, either to the benefit and satisfaction of others, or to our own advantage and comfort.

Are we rich? Then is industry requisite for keeping and securing our wealth, for managing it wisely, for employing it to its proper uses and best advantages, (in the service of God, in beneficence to our neighbour, in advancing public good;) so that we may render a good account to him who hath intrusted us with the stewardship thereof: industry is very needful to guard us from the temptations and mischiefs to which wealth doth expose us, that it do not prove a treacherous snare, an unwieldy burden, a destructive poison and plague to us, throwing us into pride and vanity, into luxury, into stupidity, into distracting solicitude, into a base, worldly, and earthly temper of heart, into a profane oblivion of God, and of our own souls.

Are we in conspicuous rank of dignity, or in honour and repute among men? Then is industry requisite to keep us fast in that state, to hold us from tumbling from that pinnacle down into extreme disgrace; for then all eyes are upon us, strictly observing what we do, and ready to pass censure on our actions; so that great diligence is

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

necessary to approve ourselves, and shun obloquy. Nothing is more brittle than honour[u]; every little thing hitting on it is able to break it, and therefore without exceeding care we cannot preserve it. Nothing is more variable or fickle than the opinions of men, (wherein honour consisteth;) it is therefore no easy matter to fix or detain them in the same place.

Eccles. x. 1.

Honour cannot live without food or fuel; it must be nourished by worthy actions; without a continual supply of them it will decay, languish, and pine away: industry therefore is required to keep it; and no less is necessary to use it well, in a due subordination to God's honour, and reference to his service, that, instead of an ornament and convenience, it do not prove a baneful mischief to us; puffing up our minds with vain conceits and complacencies, inclining us to arrogance and contempt of others, tempting us, by assuming to ourselves, to rob God of his due glory; to decline which evils great care is requisite; we must have a steady ballast, and we must hold the rudder warily, when we carry so great sail.

On the other hand, are we poor and low in the world; or do we lie under disgrace? Then do we much need industry to shun extremities of want and ignominy; that we be not swallowed up and overwhelmed by need or contempt; to support us under our pressures, to keep up our spirits from dejection and disconsolateness; to preserve us from impious discontentedness and impatience: industry is the only remedy of that condition, enabling us

[u] Vitrea fama.—
Hor. [Sat. II. 3. 222.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

to get out of it, retrieving a competence of wealth or credit; or disposing us to bear it handsomely, and with comfort; so as not to become forlorn or abject wretches.

It is so needful to every condition; and it is so for all vocations; for,

Is a man a governor, or a superior in any capacity? Then what is he but a public servant, doomed to continual labour, hired for the wages of respect and pomp, to wait on his people; in providing for their needs, protecting their safety, preserving their peace and welfare: where is he but on a stage, whereon he cannot well act his part, without vigilant attendance to his charge, and constant activity in performing all the functions thereof? He is engaged in great obligations and necessities of using extreme diligence, both in regard to himself and others. Homer's description of a prince is a good one; *One who hath much people, and many cares committed to him:*

Ὦ λαοὶ τ' ἐπιτετράφαται, καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε[x].

He must watchfully look to his own steps, who is to guide others by his authority and his example. All his actions require special conduct, not only his own credit and interest, but the common welfare depending thereon. He must heedfully advise what to do, he must diligently execute what he resolveth on. He hath the most ticklish things that can be (the rights and interests, the opinions and humours of men) to manage. He hath his own affections to curb and guide, that they be not perverted by any sinister respects, not swayed by any unjust partiality, not corrupted by flattery or

[x] [Il. II. 25.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

fear. He will find, that to wield power innocently, to brandish the sword of justice discreetly and worthily, for the maintenance of right, and encouragement of virtue, for the suppression of injury, and correction of vice, is a matter of no small skill or slight care.

Industry is, indeed, a quality most proper for persons of high rank and dignity, or of great power and authority; who have special opportunities to employ it in weighty affairs to great advantage; whose undertakings being of vast moment, do need answerable efforts to move and guide them. The industry of a mechanic or a rustic, acting in a low and narrow sphere, can effect no great matter, and therefore itself need not to be great: but the industry of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, may have a large and potent influence, so as to render a nation, a county, a town, happy, prosperous, glorious, flourishing in peace, in plenty, in virtue; it therefore for achieving such purposes need be, and should be proportionably great; a small power not being able to move a great weight, nor a weak cause to produce a mighty effect. Wherefore Cicero recommending Pompey for a public charge, doth reckon these to be the *imperatoriæ virtutes*, qualities befitting a prince, or general, wherein he did excel, *Labour in business, valour in dangers, industry in acting, nimbleness in performance, counsel in providing*[y]. And Alexander the Great, reflecting on his friends degenerating into sloth and luxury, told them, that, *It was a most*

[y] Neque enim illæ sunt solæ virtutes imperatoriæ—Labor in negotio, fortitudo in periculis, industria in agendo, celeritas in conficiendo, consilium in providendo, &c.—Cic. pro Lege Manil. [cap. XI. 29.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

slavish thing to luxuriate, and a most royal thing to labour[s].

And for those who move in a lower orb of subjection or service, I need not shew how needful industry is for them. Who knoweth not that to be a good subject, doth exact a careful regard to the commands of superiors, and a painful diligence in observing them? that to make a good servant, fidelity and diligence must concur? whereof the first doth suppose the last, it being a part of honesty in a servant to be diligent; whence, Πονηρὲ δοῦλε καὶ ὀκνηρὲ, *O thou wicked and slothful servant*, were in the Gospel well coupled; and the first epithet was grounded on the second, he being therefore wicked, because he had been slothful. Matt. xxv. 26.

Neither can a man be a true friend, or a good neighbour, or anywise a good relative, without industry disposing him to undergo pains in performing good offices, whenever need doth require, or occasion invite.

In fine, it is palpable, that there is no calling of any sort, from the sceptre to the spade, the management whereof with any good success, any credit, any satisfaction, doth not demand much work of the head, or of the hand, or of both.

If wit or wisdom be the head, if honesty be the heart, industry is the right hand of every vocation; without which the shrewdest insight and the best intention can execute nothing. A sluggard is qualified for no office, no calling, no station among men; he is a mere nobody, taking up room, pestering and clogging the world.

[s] Δουλικώτατον μέν ἐστι τὸ τρυφᾶν, βασιλικώτατον δὲ τὸ πονεῖν.— Plut. in Alex. Opp. Tom. VI. p. 1262. Ed. Steph.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

11 It also may deserve our consideration, that it is industry, whereto the public state of the world, and of each commonweal therein, is indebted for its being, in all conveniences and embellishments belonging to life, advanced above rude and sordid barbarism; yea, whereto mankind doth owe all that good learning, that morality, those improvements of soul, which elevate us beyond brutes.

To industrious study is to be ascribed the invention and perfection of all those arts whereby human life is civilized, and the world cultivated with numberless accommodations, ornaments, and beauties. All the comely, the stately, the pleasant, and useful works which we do view with delight, or enjoy with comfort, industry did contrive them, industry did frame them.

Industry reared those magnificent fabrics, and those commodious houses; it formed those goodly pictures and statues; it raised those convenient causeways, those bridges, those aqueducts; it planted those fine gardens with various flowers and fruits; it clothed those pleasant fields with corn and grass; it built those ships, whereby we plough the seas, reaping the commodities of foreign regions. It hath subjected all creatures to our command and service, enabling us to subdue the fiercest, to catch the wildest, to render the gentler sort most tractable and useful to us. It taught us from the wool of the sheep, from the hair of the goat, from the labours of the silkworm, to weave us clothes to keep us warm, to make us fine and gay It helped us from the inmost bowels of the earth to fetch divers needful tools and utensils.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

It collected mankind into cities, and compacted them into orderly societies, and devised wholesome laws, under shelter whereof we enjoy safety and peace, wealth and plenty, mutual succour and defence, sweet conversation and beneficial commerce.

It by meditation did extund all those sciences whereby our minds are enriched and enabled, our manners are refined and polished, our curiosity is satisfied, our life is benefited[a].

What is there which we admire, or wherein we delight, that pleaseth our mind, or gratifieth our sense, for the which we are not beholden to industry?

Doth any country flourish in wealth, in grandeur, in prosperity? It must be imputed to industry, to the industry of its governors settling good order, to the industry of its people following profitable occupations; so did Cato, in that notable oration of his in Sallust[b], tell the Roman senate, that it was not by the force of their arms, but by the industry of their ancestors, that commonwealth did arise to such a pitch of greatness. When sloth creepeth in, then all things corrupt and decay; then the public state doth sink into disorder, penury, and a disgraceful condition.

12 Industry is commended to us by all sorts of examples, deserving our regard and imitation. All nature is a copy thereof, and the whole world a glass, wherein we may behold this duty represented to us. We may easily observe every creature

[a] Ut varias usus meditando extunderet artes
Paullatim, &c.—
Virg. Georg. I. [133.]

[b] Cat. apud Sallust. in Bello Catil. [cap. LII.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

about us incessantly working toward the end for which it was designed, indefatigably exercising the powers with which it is endued, diligently observing the laws of its creation. Even beings void of reason, of sense, of life itself, do suggest unto us resemblances of industry; they being set in continual action toward the effecting reasonable purposes, conducing to the preservation of their own beings, or to the furtherance of common good.

The heavens do roll about with incessant motion; the sun and stars do perpetually dart their influences; the earth is ever labouring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the plants are drawing sap, and sprouting out fruits and seeds, to feed us and propagate themselves; the rivers are running, the seas are tossing, the winds are blustering, to keep the elements sweet in which we live.

Solomon sendeth us to the ant, and biddeth us to consider her ways, *Which provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.* Many such instructors we may find in Nature; the like industrious providence we may observe in every living creature; we may see this running about, that swimming, another flying in purveyance of its food and support.

Prov. vi. 6. &c.

If we look up higher to rational and intelligent natures, still more noble and apposite patterns do object themselves to us.

Here below every field, every shop, every street, the Hall, the Exchange, the Court itself, (all full of business, and fraught with the fruits of industry) do mind us how necessary industry is to us.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

If we consult History, we shall there find, that the best men have been most industrious; that all great persons, renowned for heroical goodness, (the worthy patriarchs, the holy prophets, the blessed apostles,) were for this most commendable; that, neglecting their private ease, they did undertake difficult enterprises, they did undergo painful labours for the benefit of mankind; they did pass their days, like St Paul, Ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ, *in labours and toilsome pains*, for those purposes. 2 Cor. xi. 27.

Our great example, the life of our blessed Lord himself, what was it but one continual exercise of labour? His mind did ever stand bent in careful attention, studying to do good. His body was ever moving in wearisome travel to the same divine intent. Acts x. 38.

If we yet soar further in our meditation to the superior regions, we shall there find the blessed inhabitants of heaven, the courtiers and ministers of God, very busy and active; they do vigilantly wait on God's throne[c] in readiness to receive and to despatch his commands; they are ever on the wing, and fly about like lightning to do his pleasure. They are attentive to our needs, and ever ready to protect, to assist, to relieve us! Especially, they are diligent guardians and succourers of good men: *Officious ministers sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation:* so even the seat of perfect rest is no place of idleness. Ps. ciii. 21, 22; xxxiv. 7; xci. 11. Heb. i. 14.

Yea, God himself, although immoveably and infinitely happy, is yet immensely careful, and

[c] Σῷ δὲ θρόνῳ πυρόεντι παρεστῶσιν πολύμοχθοι
Ἄγγελοι—
Orph. [Frag. III. 9. p. 454. Ed. Hermann.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

Gen. ii. 2. John v. 17. Ps. cxxi. 3; cxxvii. 1. Zech. iv. 10. 2 Chron. xvi. 9. Ps. cxlv. 15, 16. Prov. v. 21; xv. 3. Ps. xxxiv. 15. Gen. xxxi. 49.

everlastingly busy: he rested once from that great work of creation; but yet, *My Father*, saith our Lord, *worketh still;* and he never will rest from his works of providence and of grace. His eyes continue watchful over the world, and his hands stretched out in upholding it. He hath a singular regard to every creature, supplying the needs of each, and satisfying the desires of all[d].

And shall we alone be idle, while all things are so busy? Shall we keep our hands in our bosom, or stretch ourselves on our beds of laziness, while all the world about us is hard at work in pursuing the designs of its creation? Shall we be wanting to ourselves, while so many things labour for our benefit? Shall not such a cloud of examples stir us to some industry? Not to comply with so universal a practice, to cross all the world, to disagree with every creature, is it not very monstrous and extravagant?

I should close all this discourse with that, at which, in pitching on this subject, I chiefly did aim, an application exhortatory to ourselves, urging the practice of this virtue by considerations peculiar to us as scholars, and derived from the nature of our calling. But the doing this requiring a larger discourse than the time now will allow, I shall reserve to another occasion.

13 Lastly, if we consider, we shall find the root and source of all the inconveniences, the mischiefs, the wants of which we are so apt to complain, to be our sloth; and that there is hardly

[d] O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes tanquam singulos.—Aug. Conf. [III. 11. Opp. Tom. I. col. 95 F.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLV.

any of them, which commonly we might not easily prevent or remove by industry. Why is any man a beggar, why contemptible, why ignorant, why vicious, why miserable? Why, but for this one reason, because he is slothful; because he will not labour to rid himself of those evils? What could we want, if we would but take the pains to seek it, either by our industry or by our devotion? For where the first will not do, the second cannot fail to procure any good thing from him, *Who giveth to all men liberally*, and hath promised to supply the defect of our ability by his free bounty; so that if we join these two industries (industrious action and industrious prayer[e]) there is nothing in the world so good, or so great, of which, if we are capable, we may not assuredly become masters: and even for industry itself, especially in the performance of all our duties toward God, let us industriously pray: even so, *The God of peace sanctify us wholly, and make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is wellpleasing in his sight; through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.* Amen.

James i. 5.

Rom. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2. 1 Thess. v. 23.

Heb. xiii. 21.

[e] Δεήσις ἐνεργουμένη.—James v. 16.
Ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει.—Eph. vi. 18.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLVI.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR GENERAL CALLING, AS CHRISTIANS.

ROMANS XII. 11.

Not slothful in business[a].

SERM. XLVI.

INDUSTRY is a very eminent virtue, being an ingredient, or the parent, of all other virtues, of constant use upon all occasions, and having influence upon all our affairs.

For it, is our nature framed; all our powers of soul and body being fitted for it, tending to it, requiring it for their preservation and perfection.

We were designed for it in our first happy state; and upon our lapse thence were further doomed to it, as the sole remedy of our needs and the inconveniences to which we became exposed. For

Without it we cannot well sustain or secure our life in the enjoyment of any comfort or convenience; we must work to earn our food, our clothing, our shelter; and to supply every indigency of accommodations, which our nature doth crave.

To it God hath annexed the best and most desirable rewards; success to our undertakings, wealth, honour, wisdom, virtue, salvation; all which, as they flow from God's bounty, and depend on his blessing; so from them they are usually conveyed

[a] Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί. Solicitudine non pigri.—*Vulg.*

Digitized by Google

to us through our industry, as the ordinary channel and instrument of attaining them.

It is requisite to us, even for procuring ease, and preventing a necessity of immoderate labour.

It is in itself sweet and satisfactory; as freeing our mind from distraction, and wrecking irresolution; as feeding us with good hope, and yielding a foretaste of its good fruits.

It furnisheth us with courage to attempt, and resolution to achieve things needful, worthy of us, and profitable to us.

It is attended with a good conscience, and cheerful reflections, of having well spent our time, and employed our talents to good advantage.

It sweeteneth our enjoyments, and seasoneth our attainments with a delightful relish.

It is the guard of innocence, and barreth out temptations to vice, to wantonness, to vain curiosity, and pragmaticalness.

It argueth an ingenuous and generous disposition of soul; aspiring to worthy things, and pursuing them in the fairest way; disdaining to enjoy the common benefits, or the fruits of other men's labour, without deserving them from the world, and requiting it for them.

It is necessary for every condition and station, for every calling, for every relation; no man without it being able to deport himself well in any state, to manage any business, to discharge any sort of duty.

To it the world is indebted for all the culture, which advanceth it above rude and sordid barbarism; for, whatever in common life is stately, or comely, or useful, industry hath contrived it, industry hath composed and framed it.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

It is recommended to us by all sort of patterns considerable; for all nature is continually busy and active in tendency toward its proper designs; heaven and earth do work in incessant motion; every living creature is employed in progging for its sustenance; the blessed spirits are always on the wing in despatching the commands of God, and ministering succour to us; God himself is ever watchful, and ever busy in preserving the world, and providing for the needs of every creature.

The lives of our blessed Saviour, of all the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints, in this respect have been more exemplary; no virtue being more conspicuous in their practice than industry in performing the hard duties and painful tasks imposed on them for the service of God, and the benefit of mankind.

Such is the virtue upon which I have formerly discoursed in general and at large; but shall now more specially consider, according to St Paul's prescription, in reference to its most proper matter, business, explaining and pressing it accordingly.

Be not slothful in business, (that is, in discharge of it,) or *to business,* (that is, to undertake it:) this is the rule; the nature and needfulness whereof we shall declare.

By σπουδὴ, *business,* we may understand any object of our care and endeavour which doth require them, and may deserve them; which by reason of its difficulty cannot well be accomplished or attained without them; and which is productive of some fruit or recompense answerable to them; the which hath *operæ causam,* a need of labour, and *operæ pretium,* some effect worth our pains: if

Digitized by Google

it be not such, it is not a due matter of virtuous and laudable industry.

There are many things, about which men with great earnestness employ themselves, called business, but not deserving that name: there are divers spurious kinds of industry, which may not pretend to commendation, but rather do merit blame; according to that of St Chrysostom, *Labour which hath no profit cannot obtain any praise*[b].

There is a *κενοσπουδία*, a vain industry, and a *κακοσπουδία*, a naughty industry, both agreeing with genuine virtuous industry in the act, as implying careful and painful activity, but discording from it in object and design; and consequently in worth and moral esteem.

Aliud agere, to be impertinently busy, doing that which conduceth to no good purpose, is in some respect worse than to do nothing, or to forbear all action; for it is a positive abuse of our faculties, and trifling with God's gifts[c]; it is a throwing away labour and care, things valuable in themselves; it is often a running out of the way, which is worse than standing still; it is a

[b] *Πόνος οὐδὲν κέρδος ἔχων, ἐγκωμίου παντὸς ἀπεστέρηται.*—Chrys. Orat. LXIV. Opp. Tom. V. [p. 451.]

[c] *Ἄλλῳ γὰρ οὐδενὶ φιλοπόνου τὸν κενόσπουδον ἀφορίζομεν ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις ὄντα πολλάκις, ἢ τῷ τὸν μὲν εἰς ἀνωφελῆ πονεῖν καὶ ἀδιαφόρως, τὸν δὲ ἕνεκά του τῶν συμφερόντων καὶ λυσιτελῶν.*—Plut. de Com. Not. adv. Stoic. [Opp. Tom. X. p. 380. Ed. Reisk.]

Σπουδάζειν καὶ πονεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν, ἠλίθιον φαίνεται καὶ λίαν παιδικόν.—Arist. Eth. X. 6. [6.]

Ἡ ἐπὶ μικροῖς σπουδὴ μέμψιν φέρει.—Plut. ibid.

Vid. de Glor. Athen. Tom. I. p. 621. Ed. Steph.

Οἱ σπουδάζοντες ἐν τοῖς γελοίοις, ἐν τοῖς σπουδαίοις ἔσονται καταγέλαστοι.—Cat. Maj. apud. Plut. in Apoph. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 750. Ed. Reisk.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

debasing our reason, and declining from our manhood, nothing being more foolish or childish than to be solicitous and serious about trifles: for who are more busy and active than children? who are fuller of thoughts and designs, or more eager in prosecution of them, than they? But all is about ridiculous toys, the shadows of business, suggested to them by apish curiosity and imitation. Of such industry we may understand that of the Preacher, *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them;* for that a man soon will be weary of that labour, which yieldeth no profit, or beneficial return.

Eccles. x. 15.

But there is another industry worse than that, when men are very busy in devising and compassing mischiefs; an industry whereof the Devil affordeth a great instance; for the cursed fiend is very diligent, ever watching for occasions to supplant us, ever plotting methods and means to do harm, ever driving on his mischievous designs with unwearied activity; *Going to and fro in the earth; Running about as a roaring lion,* looking for prey, and *seeking whom he may devour.*

Luke xxii. 31. 2 Cor. ii. 11. Job i. 7. 1 Pet. v. 8.

And his wicked brood are commonly like him, being *Workers of iniquity,* ἐργάται τῆς ἀδικίας, *Painful men,* οἱ πονηροὶ, *Men that will do all things,* οἱ πανοῦργοι; who will spare no pains, nor leave any stone unturned, for satisfying their lusts, and accomplishing their bad designs.

Luke xiii. 27. Psal. vi. 8.

So indeed it is, that as no great good, so neither can any great mischief be effected without much pains; and if we consider either the characters, or the practices of those, who have been famous mischief-doers, the pests of mankind and disturbers

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

of the world[d], we shall find them to have been no sluggards.

These two sorts of vain and bad industry the prophet Isaiah seemeth to describe in those words; *They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web;* of which expressions one may denote mischievous, the other frivolous diligence in contrivance or execution of naughty or vain designs; and to them both that of the prophet Hosea may be referred; *They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind;* guilt, remorse, and punishment being the consequences of both. And of them both common experience doth afford very frequent and obvious instances, a great part of human life being taken up with them. For

Isa. lix. 5.

Hos. viii. 7. Eccles. xxxiv. 2. Prov. xxii. 8. Hos. x. 13.

How assiduously intent and eager may we observe men to be at sports! How soon will they rise to go forth to them! With what constancy and patience will they toil in them all the day! How indefatigable are they in riding and running about after a dog or a hawk, to catch a poor beast or silly bird!

How long will men sit poring on their games, dispensing with their food and sleep for it[e]!

How long and serious attention will men yield to a wanton play! How many hours will they contentedly sit thereat! What study will men employ on jests and impertinent wit! How earnest will they be to satisfy their vain curiosity!

[d] Catiline, Marius, Stilico, Cæsar, &c.

[e] Συνείρουσι (οἱ φιλόκυβοι) νύκτας ἡμέραις ἄσιτοι καὶ ἄποτοι, καὶ ἡδονῆς ἡδονὴ περίεστι —Lib. Orat. XXXI. [de Servit. Opp. Tom. II. p. 647 A.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

How in such cases do men forget what they are doing, that sport should be sport[f], not work; to divert and relax us, not to employ and busy us; to take off our minds a little, not wholly to take them up; not to exhaust or tire our spirits, but to refresh and cheer them, that they may become more fit for grave and serious occupations!

Jer. ii. 13. How painful will others be, *In hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water;* that is, in immoderate pursuit of worldly designs! How studiously will they plod, how restlessly will they trudge, what carking and drudgery will they endure in driving on projects of ambition and avarice! What will not they gladly do or suffer to get a little preferment, or a little profit! It was a common practice of old, and sure the world is not greatly mended since the Psalmist did thus

Ps. xxxix. 6. reflect, *Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.*

How many vigilant and stout pursuers are there of sensuality and riotous excess; such as

Isai. v. 11. those of whom the Prophet speaketh, *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!*

How busy (O shame! O misery! how fiercely busy) are some in accomplishing designs of malice and revenge! How intent are some to overreach, to circumvent, to supplant their neighbour! How sore pains will some take to seduce, corrupt, or debauch others! How active will some be in sowing

[f] Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι παίζοντα δεῖ παίζειν.—Plut. [Sympos. Lib. VII. qu. 7. Opp. Tom. VIII. Ed. Reisk.]

Digitized by Google

strifes, in raising factions, in fomenting disorders in the world! How many industrious slaves hath the Devil[s], who will spare no pains about any kind of work which he putteth them to! How many like those of whom the Wise Man saith, *Their feet run to evil,* and are *swift in running to mischief: They sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall!* SERM. XLVI. Prov. i. 16; vi. 18; iv. 16.

Now with all these labourers we may well expostulate in the words of the Prophet; *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* Isai. lv. 2.

Such labours are unworthy of men, much less do they beseem Christians.

It becometh us not as rational creatures to employ the excellent gifts of our nature, and noble faculties of our high-born soul, the forces of our mind, the advantages of our fortune, our precious time, our very care and labour, vainly or unprofitably upon anything base or mean: being that our reason is capable of achieving great and worthy things, we much debase it by stooping to regard toys, we do extremely abuse it by working mischief.

Much more doth it misbecome us as Christians (that is, persons devoted to so high a calling, who have so worthy employments assigned to us, so glorious hopes, so rich encouragements proposed to us for our work) to spend our thoughts and endeavours on things impertinent to our great design, or mainly thwarting it. Eph. i. 18.

The proper matter and object of our industry

[s] Ἐννοήσωμέν τινα ὁ διάβολος ἐπέταξε, πῶς ἐπίπονα, πῶς ἐπίμοχθα, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιθ'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 594.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

(those false ones being excluded) is true business; or that which is incumbent on a man to do, either in way of duty, being required by God, or by dictate of reason, as conducing to some good purpose; so that in effect it will turn to account, and finally in advantageous return will pay him for his labour of mind or body; that which the Wise Man did intend, when he advised, *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might;* whatever thy hand findeth, that is, whatever by divine appointment, (by the command or providence of God,) or which, upon rational deliberation, doth occur as matter of our action; comprising every good purpose and reasonable undertaking incident to us.

Eccles. ix. 10.

But our business, according to the holy Apostle's intent, may be supposed especially to be the work of our calling; to which each man hath a peculiar obligation; and which therefore is most properly his business, or ἡ σπουδή, emphatically, the business allotted to him.

Now this business, our calling, is double; our general calling, which is common to us all as Christians, and our particular calling, which peculiarly belongeth to us, as placed in a certain station, either in the Church or State. In both which vocations, that we are much obliged and concerned to be industrious, shall be now my business to declare.

I. As to our general calling, (that sublime, that heavenly, that holy vocation[h],) in which by divine grace, according to the evangelical dispensation, we are engaged, that necessarily requireth and most highly deserveth from us a great measure of

[h] Ἡ ἄνω κλῆσις.—Phil. iii. 14. Κλῆσις ἐπουράνιος.—Heb. iii. 1. Ἁγία κλῆσις.—2 Tim. i. 9. Cf. Eph. i. 18. 2 Thess. i. 11.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

industry; the nature and design of it requireth, the fruit and result of it deserveth our utmost diligence; all sloth is inconsistent with discharging the duties, with enjoying the hopes, with obtaining the benefits thereof. For

It is a state of continual work, and is expressed in terms importing abundant, incessant, intense care and pain; for to be indeed Christians, *We must work out our salvation with fear and trembling; We must by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; We must walk worthy of the Lord, to all wellpleasing, being fruitful in every good work; We must be rich in good works, and filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God; We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Phil. ii. 12. Rom. ii. 7. Col. i. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Phil. i. 11. John xv. 5, 8, 16. James iii. 17. Eph. ii. 10.

We have a soul to save, and are appointed, Εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας, *To make an acquist of salvation.*

1 Thess. v. 9.

We have a mind to improve with virtue and wisdom, qualifying us for entrance into heaven, for enjoyment of God's favour, for conversation with angels.

As Christians we are assumed to be servants of God, and re-admitted into his family, from which, for our disloyalty, we had been discarded; so that, as he was our natural Lord, so he is now such also by special grace; who did make us, who doth maintain us, under whose protection and at whose disposal we subsist; whence we are obliged to be faithfully diligent in his service; we must constantly wait upon him in devotional addresses; we must carefully

1 Thess. i. 9. Rom. vii. 6; vi. 22. Eph. ii. 19.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

study to know his pleasure; we must endeavour exactly to perform his will, and obey his commands; we must strive to advance his glory, to promote his interest, to improve all talents and advantages committed to us for those purposes; we must, as St Paul expresseth it, *Always abound in the work of the Lord.*

Eph. v. 10. Rom. xii. 2. Luke xi. 28. Matt. xxv. 27. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

We must also look upon ourselves as servants of Christ our Redeemer; who by his blood hath purchased us to himself, that we might be zealous of good works; performing a service to him, which consisteth in a faithful discharge of manifold duties, and in pursuance of all virtue; with most intent application of mind, with expedite promptitude, with accurate circumspection; *Giving all diligence,* σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες, as St Peter speaketh, in adding one virtue to another; *Being ready,* as St Paul saith, *to every good work;* and, *Seeing that we walk circumspectly,* or behave ourselves exactly according to the rules of duty in all our conversation.

Col. iii. 24. Eph. vi. 7. 1 Cor. vii. 23; vi. 20. Tit. ii. 14. 2 Pet. i. 5. Tit. iii. 1. Eph. v. 15.

This service requireth of us assiduous attendance on works of piety and devotion; that, *We do incessantly watch to prayer,* that, *We always give thanks,* that, *We continually do offer up the sacrifice of praise to God.*

Col. iv. 2. Eph. vi. 18. Rom. xii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 17. Luke xviii. 1.

It demandeth from us a continual *Labour of charity;* that, *We serve one another in love;* that, *We should, as we have opportunity, work good to all men,* that, *We should always pursue good toward one another, and toward all men.*

1 Thess. v. 18. Eph. v. 20. Col. iii. 17. Heb. xiii. 15. 1 Thess. i. 3.

It obligeth us, *With all our powers,* εἰ δυνατόν, *to pursue peace with all men,* (which, considering our natural peevishness, pride, and perverseness,

Gal. v. 13; vi. 10. 1 Thess. v. 15.

Digitized by Google

is often no easy task,) and that, *We do σπουδάζειν, studiously endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* Rom. xii. 18. Heb. xii. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Eph. iv. 3. James i. 4.

It chargeth on us contentedly and patiently to undergo whatever God doth impose of burden or sufferance, so that *Patience have its perfect work;* and it is a crabbed work to bend our stiff inclinations, to quell our refractory passions, to make our sturdy humour buckle thereto.

It doth exact, that we should govern and regulate, according to very strict and severe laws, all the faculties of our soul, all the members of our body, all internal motions, and all external actions proceeding from us; that we should check our inclinations, curb our appetites, and compose our passions; that we should guard our hearts from vain thoughts and bad desires; that we should bridle our tongues from evil and from idle discourses; that we should order our steps in the straight way of righteousness, not deflecting to the right hand or to the left.

In the discharge of this service, how many rough difficulties are there to be surmounted, how many great obstacles to be removed, how many stout oppositions to be encountered, how many potent enemies to be vanquished, how many sore hardships, crosses, and tribulations to be endured!

How shrewd a task must we find it to circumcise our hearts, to mortify our earthly members, to crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts, to pull out our right eyes, and cut off our right hands, to renounce our worldly interests, to hate our nearest relations, to take up and bear our cross, whenever conscience and duty shall call us thereto!

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

Our calling therefore doth require great industry; and the business of it consequently is well represented by those performances, which demand the greatest intention and laborious activity; it is styled exercise, (agonistic and ascetic exercise; 1 Tim. iv. 7. Γύμναζε σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, *Exercise thyself to godliness;* Acts xxiv. 16. and, Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ, *Herein I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men;*) wrestling, Heb. xii. 1. (Ἡμῶν ἡ πάλη, *Our wrestling is not* only *against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers;*) 1 Cor. ix. 24. running a race, (*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: So run that ye may obtain: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling;*) Phil. iii. 14. a warfare, 2 Tim. iv. 7. a combating, (*War a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience: Fight the good fight: Thou therefore endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ: Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;*) 1 Tim. i. 18, 19. offering violence, (*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;*) 1 Tim. vi. 12. watching, (*Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober: Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*) 2 Tim. ii. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 25. Matt. xi. 12. 1 Thess. v. 6. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Matt. xxvi. 41; xxiv. 42. Luke xii. 37. 1 Pet. v. 8. Rev. iii. 2; xvi. 15.

Hence the precepts importing the general tenor of Christian practice are usually couched in terms implying great sedulity and contention of soul; Luke xiii. 24. Ἀγωνίζεσθε, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate:* Heb. iv. 11. Σπουδάσωμεν, *Let us labour therefore to enter into that* John vi. 27. *rest:* Ἐργάζεσθε, *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life:* 2 Pet. i. 10. Σπουδάσατε, *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure:* 1 Pet. i. 13. *Gird up the loins of your mind, be* Luke xii. 35.

Digitized by Google

sober, and hope to the end: Wherefore, brethren, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Eph. vi. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 14. SERM. XLVI.

Such is the work of our general calling, and so much industry it challengeth from us; with great reason indeed, for that such work is needful to our happiness, and that our labour will certainly be rewarded therewith.

The work, indeed, of itself is most worthy to employ us, doth most become us, doth much adorn us, doth best befit our divine extraction and large capacity; is the noblest, the handsomest, the sweetest employment that could take us up; but we have also the greatest inducements and encouragements possible for our industry therein. John iv. 36.

There are, by the divine bounty and mercy, wages assigned abundantly correspondent to our work, yea, infinitely surpassing it; there is Πολὺς μισθὸς, *A great* (or a manifold) *hire* for our slender and simple performances; there are several noble prizes highly worth our striving for with our utmost strength and contention of soul. Matt. v. 12.

In recompense thereof we shall assuredly gain even here in this transitory state the special favour and love of God, with his constant protection and care for our good[1]; his faithful direction and friendly assistance to guide us and uphold us in all our ways, to bless and prosper our undertakings, to supply us in our needs, and comfort us in our distresses; so that we shall lack nothing that is good, that no evil shall happen to us, that all things shall concur and co-operate for our benefit. Ps. xxxiv. 9. lxxxiv. 11. xxxiii. 19. xxxvii. 3, 19. Ps. xci. 10. Prov. xii. 21. Rom. viii. 38, 39.

[1] *He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*—Rom. xiv. 18.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

We shall thereby taste the satisfactions of a calm mind and a sound conscience, quickened by the consolations of the divine Spirit; *The peace of God ruling in our hearts, which passeth all understanding.*

Col. iii. 15. Phil. iv. 7.

We shall afterward, when this moment is passed over, and our short day's work dispatched, receive from God's bountiful hand an unconceivable affluence of good things, an eternal permanence of life; undisturbed rest, indefectible wealth, ineffable joy, incorruptible glory, a kingdom unshakeable. *He,* saith our Lord, *that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting. To them,* saith St Paul, *who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, God in recompense will bestow eternal life.* And, *I have,* saith that blessed labourer of himself, *fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*

James i. 22. 1 Pet. v. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 25. John iv. 36. Rom. ii. 6, 7. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

What more effectual spur or incentive can there be to industry in this business, than to consider that which St Paul so often doth inculcate; *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same* (a recompense for the same) *he shall receive of the Lord;* and, *Knowing that* (in consideration of our service done to the Lord) *of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance?*

Eph. vi. 8. 2 Cor. v. 10. Col. iii. 24.

What exhortation can be more firmly grounded, or strongly backed, than is that of the Apostle, *Therefore, my brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord?*

1 Cor. xv. 58.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

May it not also much encourage us to industry, to be assured, that not only the kind of our work, but the degree of our labour shall be considered and requited, in just proportion; so that the harder we work, the higher we shall be rewarded; for, *To each one,* saith our Lord, *the Son of man shall render a reward,* κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ, *according to his performance. Every one,* saith St Paul, *shall receive,* τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, *his proper reward according to his proper work;* whence we have reason to observe St John's advice, *Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward.*

Matt. xvi. 27. 1 Cor. iii. 8. Rev. xxii. 12; ii. 23. Matt. xxv. 21. Luke xix. 12. 2 John 8.

To be negligent or slothful in such a case, for want of a little care and pains to forfeit such advantages, what a pity, what a folly is it! Were an opportunity presented, by a little minding our business, and bestirring ourselves, to procure a fair estate, or a good preferment, would not he be deemed mad or sottish, who should sit still, and forego that his advantage? How much more wildness is it to be drowsy and sluggish in this case, thereby losing eternal bliss and glory! Well therefore might the Apostle say, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* How shall we escape not only the sin and guilt of basest ingratitude toward him that graciously doth offer it, but the imputation of most wretched folly, in being so much wanting to our own interest and welfare?

Heb. ii. 3.

Is it not a sad thing, a woful shame, to observe what pains men will throw away upon things of small or no concernment to them? yea, what toil and drudgery they will sustain in the service of Satan, in pursuit of sin, in the gratification of their vanities and lusts?

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

What pains will a covetous wretch take in scraping for pelf! How will he rack his mind with carking solicitude to get, to keep, to spare it! How will he tire his spirits with restless travail! How will he pinch his carcass for want of what nature craveth! What infamy and obloquy will he endure for his niggardly parsimony and sordidness!

How much labour will an ambitious fop undergo for preferment or vain honour! To how many tedious attendances, to how pitiful servilities will he submit! What sore crosses and disappointments will he swallow! What affronts and indignities will he patiently digest, without desisting from his enterprise!

1 Cor. ix. 25.

How will a man, as St Paul observed, *πάντα ἐγκρατεύεσθαι*, endure all painful abstinence and continence, in order to the obtaining a corruptible crown, a fading garland of bays, a puff of vain applause!

What diligence will men use to compass the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures! how watchful in catching opportunities, how eager in quest of them will they be! What difficulties will they undertake, what hazards will they incur, what damages and inconvenience will they sustain, rather than fail of satisfying their desires!

What achings of head and heart; what pangs of mind, and gripes of conscience; what anxieties of regret and fear, will every worker of iniquity undergo! So faithful friends hath this vain and evil world; so diligent servants hath the accursed lord thereof; so careful and laborious will men be to destroy and damn themselves. O that we could be willing to spend as much care and pains in the

Digitized by Google

service of our God[k]! O that we were as true friends of ourselves! O that we could be as industrious for our salvation! that is, in the business of our general calling: which having considered, let us proceed to the other business belonging to us, which is, SERM. XLVI.

II. The business of our particular calling; that in reference whereto St Paul doth prescribe, *Every man as the Lord hath called him, so let him walk: Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called;* let him so abide, so faithfully to prosecute the work, and discharge the duty of it; the doing which otherwise he termeth Πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *To do our own business, (working with our hands,)* and enjoineth it in opposition to those two great pests of life, sloth and pragmatical curiosity; or the neglect of our own, and meddling with other men's affairs. 1 Cor. vii. 17, 20. 1 Thess. iv. 11. Eph. iv. 28.

This the Apostle nameth our calling, because we are called or appointed thereto by divine Providence; for he supposeth and taketh it for granted, that to each man in this world God hath assigned a certain station, unto which peculiar action is suited; in which station he biddeth him quietly to abide, till Providence fairly doth translate him, and during his abode therein diligently to execute the work thereof. 1 Cor. vii. 22.

Every man is a member of a double body; of the civil commonwealth, and of the Christian church: in relation to the latter whereof St Paul telleth us, (and what he saith by parity of reason may be referred likewise to the former,) that, *God hath set the members every one in the body, as it pleaseth* 1 Cor. xii. 18.

[k] Vid. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιθ'. Opp. Tom. VI. [p. 594.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

him; and as it is in the natural, so it is in every political and spiritual body, every member hath its proper use and function; *All members,* saith St Paul, *have not* τὴν αὐτὴν πρᾶξιν, *the same office,* or the same work and operation; yet every one hath some work. There is no member designed to be idle or useless, conferring no benefit to the whole; but, *The whole body,* saith the Apostle, *fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love;* each member doth conspire and co-operate to the strength, nourishment, thriving, and welfare of the whole.

Rom. xii. 4.

Eph. iv. 16.

Every man (who continueth a man in his senses, or in any good degree of natural integrity) is by God endowed with competent abilities to discharge some function useful to common good, or at least needful to his own sustenance[1]; to every one some talent is committed, which in subordination to God's service he may improve, to the benefit of the world, God's temporal, or of the church, God's spiritual kingdom.

It is plainly necessary, that the greatest part of men should have a determinate work allotted to them, that they may support their life and get their food, without being injurious, offensive, or burdensome to others; for their living they must either follow some trade, or they must shark and filch, or they must beg, or they must starve.

And the rest are obliged to do somewhat conducible to public good, that they may deserve to live; for a drone should not be among the bees, nor

[1] Ἑκάστῳ ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ Θεός.—1 Cor. vii. 17.

Digitized by Google

hath right to devour the honey. If any man doth pretend, or presume, that he hath nothing to do but to eat, to sleep, to play, to laugh, to enjoy his ease, his plêasure, his humour, he thereby doth as it were disclaim a reasonable title of living among men, and sharing in the fruits of their industry; he, in St Paul's judgment, should be debarred of food, for, *This*, saith the holy Apostle, *we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat.* SERM. XLVI. 2 Thess. iii. 10.

Such an one in the body of men, what is he but an unnatural excrescence, sucking nutriment from it, without yielding ornament or use? What is he but a wen deforming and encumbering the body, or a canker infesting and corrupting it?

As no man (at least with decency, convenience, and comfort) can live in the world, without being obliged to divers other men for their help in providing accommodations for him; so justice and ingenuity, corroborated by divine sanctions, do require of him, that in commutation he, one way or other, should undertake some pains redounding to the benefit of others.

✓ So hath the great author of order distributed the ranks and offices of men in order to mutual benefit and comfort, that one man should plough, another thresh, another grind, another labour at the forge, another knit or weave, another sail, another trade, another supervise all these, labouring to keep them all in order and peace; that one should work with his hands and feet, another with his head and tongue; all conspiring to one common end, the welfare of the whole, and the supply of what is useful to each particular member; every

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

man so reciprocally obliging and being obliged; the prince being obliged to the husbandman for his bread, to the weaver for his clothes, to the mason for his palace, to the smith for his sword; those being all obliged to him for his vigilant care in protecting them, for their security in pursuing the work, and enjoying the fruit of their industry.

So every man hath a calling and proper business; whereto that industry is required, I need not much to prove, the thing itself in reason and experience being so clearly evident: for what business can be well dispatched, what success can be expected to any undertaking, in what calling can any man thrive, without industry? What business is there that will go on of itself, or proceed to any good issue, if we do not carefully look to it, steadily hold it in its course, constantly push and drive it forward? It is true, as in nature, so in all affairs, *Nihil movet non motum, Nothing moveth without being moved.*

Our own interest should move us to be industrious in our calling, that we may obtain the good effects of being so in a comfortable and creditable subsistence; that we may not suffer the damages and wants, the disappointments and disgraces ensuing on sloth: but the chief motive should be from piety and conscience; for that it is a duty which we owe to God. For God having placed us in our station, he having apportioned to us our task, we being in transaction of our business his servants, we do owe to him that necessary property of good servants, without which fidelity cannot subsist; for how can he be looked on as a faithful servant, who doth not effectually perform the work

1 Cor. iv. 2.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

charged on him, or diligently execute the orders of his master?

St Paul doth enjoin servants, that they should in all things obey their masters, with conscientious regard to God, as therein performing service to God, and expecting recompense from him: and of princes he saith, that they, in dispensation of justice, enacting laws, imposing taxes, and all political administrations, are *The ministers of God,* προσκαρτεροῦντες, *attending constantly upon this very thing:* and if these extremes, the highest and lowest of all vocations, are services of God; if the highest upon that score be tied to so much diligence, then surely all middle places, upon the same account of conscience toward God, do exact no less.

Col. iii. 22. Eph. vi. 5. 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23.

Rom. xiii. 6.

If he that hath one talent, and he that hath ten, must both improve them for God's interest; then he that hath two, or three, or more, is obliged to the same duty proportionably.

Every one should consider the world as the family of that great Paterfamilias, *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,* and himself as an officer or servant therein, by God's will and designation constituted in that employment, into which Providence hath cast him; to confer, in his order and way, somewhat toward a provision for the maintenance of himself and of his fellow-servants. Of a superior officer our Lord saith, *Who is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season?* So the greatest men are as stewards, treasurers, comptrollers, or purveyors; the rest are inferior servants, in their proper rank and capacity.

Eph. iii. 15.

Matt. xxiv. 45. Luke xii. 42.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVI.

And he that with diligence performeth his respective duty (be it high and honourable, or mean and contemptible in outward appearance) will please God, as keeping good order, and as being useful to his service; so that, upon the reckoning, God will say to him, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* But he that doeth otherwise (behaving himself carelessly or sluggishly in his business) will offend God, as committing disorder, and as being unprofitable.

1 Cor. xiv. 33.

Matt. xxv. 21.

He committeth disorder, according to that of St Paul; *We hear there are some, which walk among you disorderly, not working at all.* His sentence and doom will be, according to our Lord, *O thou wicked and slothful servant—Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness;* which words are spoken in relation to one who being a slatterer, or sluggard in his calling, did not improve the special talent intrusted with him for God's service.

2 Thess. iii. 11.

Matt. xxv. 26—30.

In fine, if we are conscientiously industrious in our vocation, we shall assuredly find the blessing of God thereon; and that he thereby will convey good success, comfort, competent wealth, a fair reputation, all desirable good unto us; for as all these things are promised to industry, so the promise especially doth belong to that industry, which a man doth exercise in an orderly course of action in his own way; or rather in God's way, wherein divine Providence hath set him.

An irregular or impertinent laboriousness, out of a man's calling or sphere; a being diligent in other men's affairs, invading their office, (as if I a

Digitized by Google

priest will be trading, a layman preaching,) may not claim the benefit of those promises, or the blessings of industry: but a husbandman, who, with conscientious regard to God, and confidence in him, is painful in tilling his ground, may expect a good crop; a merchant, who (upon the same principle, with the like disposition) earnestly followeth his trade, may hope for safe voyages and good markets; a prince, carefully minding his affairs, may look for peace and prosperity to his country; a scholar studying hard may be well assured of getting knowledge, and finding truth; all, who with honest diligence constantly do pursue their business, may confidently and cheerfully hope to reap the advantages suitable to it from the favourable blessing of God. So that we have all reason to observe the Apostle's precept, *Not to be slothful in business.*

SERM. XLVI.

Prov. x. 4; xiii. 11.

I should apply this doctrine to our own case, urging its practice by considerations peculiar to our vocation: but having already passed the bounds of time, I reserve the doing it to another opportunity.

Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

1 Thess. v. 23. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLVII.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING, AS GENTLEMEN AND SCHOLARS.

ROM. XII. 11.

Not slothful in business.

SERM. XLVII.

I HAVE largely treated upon the duty recommended in this precept, and urged the observance of it in general, at a distance: I now intend more particularly and closely to apply it, in reference to those persons who seem more especially obliged to it, and whose observing it may prove of greatest consequence to public good; the which application may also be most suitable and profitable to this audience. Those persons are of two sorts; the one gentlemen, the other scholars.

I. The first place, as civility demandeth, we assign to gentlemen, or persons of eminent rank in the world, well allied, graced with honour, and furnished with wealth: the which sort of persons I conceive in a high degree obliged to exercise industry in business.

This at first hearing may seem a little paradoxical and strange; for who have less business than gentlemen? who do need less industry than they? He that hath a fair estate, and can live on his means, what hath he to do, what labour or

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

trouble can be exacted of him, what hath he to think on, or trouble his head with, but how to invent recreations and pastimes to divert himself, and spend his waste leisure pleasantly? Why should not he be allowed to enjoy himself, and the benefits which nature or fortune have freely dispensed to him, as he thinketh best, without offence? Why may he not say with the rich man in the Gospel, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?* Is it not often said by the Wise Man, that, *There is nothing better under the sun, than that a man should make his soul to enjoy good* in a cheerful and comfortable fruition of his estate? According to the passable notion and definition, What is a gentleman but his pleasure?

Luke xii. 19.

Eccles. ii. 24; iii. 22; v. 18; viii. 15.

If this be true, if a gentleman be nothing else but this, then truly he is a sad piece, the most inconsiderable, the most despicable, the most pitiful and wretched creature in the world: if it is his privilege to do nothing, it is his privilege to be most unhappy; and to be so will be his fate, if he live according to it; for he that is of no worth or use, who produceth no beneficial fruit, who performeth no service to God or to the world, what title can he have to happiness? What capacity thereof? What reward can he claim? What comfort can he feel? To what temptations is he exposed! What guilts will he incur!

But in truth it is far otherwise: to suppose that a gentleman is loose from business is a great mistake; for, indeed, no man hath more to do, no man lieth under greater engagements to industry than he.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

He is deeply obliged to be continually busy in more ways than other men, who have but one simple calling or occupation allotted to them; and that upon a triple account; in respect to God, to the world, and to himself.

1 He is first obliged to continual employment in respect to God.

He, out of a grateful regard to divine bounty for the eminency of his station, adorned with dignity and repute, for the plentiful accommodations and comforts of his life, for his exemption from those pinching wants, those meaner cares, those sordid entertainments, and those toilsome drudgeries to which other men are subject, is bound to be more diligent in God's service, employing all the advantages of his state to the glory of his munificent Benefactor, to whose good providence alone he doth owe them; for who maketh him to differ from another? And what hath he that he did not receive from God's free bounty?

1 Cor. iv. 7.

In proportion to the bulk of his fortune, his heart should be enlarged with a thankful sense of God's goodness to him; his mouth should ever be filled with acknowledgment and praise; he should always be ready to express his grateful resentment of so great and peculiar obligations.

He should dedicate larger portions of that free leisure which God hath granted to him, in waiting upon God, and constant performances of devotion.

He, in frequently reflecting on the particular ample favours of God to him, should imitate the holy Psalmist, that illustrious pattern of great and

Digitized by Google

fortunate men; saying after him, with his spirit and disposition of soul; *Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side; therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou hast set my feet in a large room: Thou preparest a table before me;— Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over;—to the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent: The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage;* therefore *I will bless the Lord.*

Ps. lxxi. 21. Ps. xxx. 7; xxxi. 8; xxiii. 5; xxx. 12; xvi. 5, 6, 7;

In conceiving such meditations, his head and his heart should constantly be employed; as also in contriving ways of declaring and discharging real gratitude; asking himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* What shall I render to him, not only as a man, for all the gifts of nature; as a Christian, for all the blessings of grace; but as a gentleman also, for the many advantages of this my condition, beyond so many of my brethren, by special providence indulged to me?

cxvi. 12.

He hath all the common duties of piety, of charity, of sobriety, to discharge with fidelity; for being a gentleman doth not exempt him from being a Christian, but rather more strictly doth engage him to be such in a higher degree than others; it is an obligation peculiarly incumbent on him, in return for God's peculiar favours, to pay God all due obedience, and to exercise himself in all good works; disobedience being a more heinous crime in

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

him than in others, who have not such encouragements to serve God.

His obedience may be inculcated by those arguments which Joshua and Samuel did use in pressing it on the Israelites; *Only*, said Samuel, *fear the Lord, and serve him in truth; for consider how great things God hath done for you*; and, *I have given you*, saith God by Joshua, *a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not; and ye dwell in them: of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not, do ye eat. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.*

1 Sam. xii. 24.

Josh. xxiv. 13, 14.

His disobedience may be aggravated, as Nehemiah did that of the Israelites: *They took strong cities and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards and oliveyards, and fruit-trees in abundance; so they did eat and were filled, and became fat; and delighted themselves in thy great goodness: nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs.—They have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness, which thou gavest them; neither turned they from their wicked works.*

Neh. ix. 25, &c. Isai. lxiii. 10. Ps. cvi. 6. Jer. ii. 7. Ezek. xvi. 7. 1 Sam. xv. 17. 2 Sam. xii. 7. Neh. ix. 35.

A gentleman hath more talents committed to him, and consequently more employment required of him: if a rustic labourer, or a mechanic artisan, hath one talent, a gentleman hath ten; he hath innate vigour of spirit, and height of courage fortified by use; he hath accomplishment and refinement of parts by liberal education; he hath the succours of parentage, alliance, and friendship; he hath wealth, he hath honour, he hath power and

Digitized by Google

authority, he hath command of time and leisure; he hath so many precious and useful talents intrusted to him, not to be wrapped up in a napkin, or hidden under ground; not be squandered away in private satisfactions; but for negotiation, to be put out to use, to be improved in the most advantageous way to God's service. Every talent doth require a particular care and pains to manage it well.

Luke xix. 20. Matt. xxv. 25. Luke xix. 13. Matt. xxv. 16, 27;

He particularly is God's steward, intrusted with God's substance for the sustenance and supply of God's family; to relieve his fellow-servants in their need, upon seasonable occasions, by hospitality, mercy, and charitable beneficence; according to that intimation of our Lord, *Who is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler of his household, to give them their portion and meat in due season?* and according to those apostolical precepts, *As every one hath received a gift,* χάρισμα (or special favour,) *even so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God:* and, *Charge the rich in this world,— that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*

xxv. 14. Luke xii. 42. 1 Pet. iv. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.

And he that is obliged to purvey for so many, and so to abound in good works, how can he want business? How can he pretend to a writ of ease?

Surely that gentleman is very blind, and very barren of invention, who is to seek for work fit for him, or cannot easily discern many employments belonging to him, of great concern and consequence.

It is easy to prompt and shew him many businesses, indispensably belonging to him, as such.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

It is his business to minister relief to his poor neighbours, in their wants and distresses, by his wealth. It is his business to direct and advise the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted, to reclaim the wicked, and encourage the good, by his wisdom. It is his business to protect the weak, to rescue the oppressed, to ease those who groan under heavy burdens, by his power; to be such a gentleman and so employed as Job was; *Who did not eat his morsel alone, so that the fatherless did not eat thereof; Who did not withhold the poor from their desire, or cause the eyes of the widow to fail; Who did not see any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; Who delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.*

Job xxxi. 17, 16; xxxi. 19; xxix. 12.

It is his business to be hospitable; kind and helpful to strangers; following those noble gentlemen, Abraham and Lot, who were so ready to invite and entertain strangers with bountiful courtesy.

1 Pet. iv. 9. Heb. xiii. 2. Rom. xii. 13. Gen. xviii. 1; xix. 1.

It is his business to maintain peace, and appease dissensions among his neighbours, interposing his counsel and authority in order thereto: whereto he hath that brave gentleman, Moses, recommended for his pattern.

Exod. ii. 13. Acts vii. 26.

It is his business to promote the welfare and prosperity of his country with his best endeavours, and by all his interest; in which practice the Sacred History doth propound divers gallant gentlemen (Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah, Daniel, Mordecai, and all such renowned patriots) to guide him.

Judg. v. 9.

It is his business to govern his family well; to educate his children in piety and virtue; to keep his servants in good order.

Josh. xxiv. 15. Ps. ci.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

It is his business to look to his estate, and to keep it from wasting; that he may sustain the repute of his person and quality with decency; that he may be furnished with ability to do good, may provide well for his family, may be hospitable, may have wherewith to help his brethren; for if, according to St Paul's injunction, *A man should work with his own hands, that he may have somewhat to impart, μεταδιδόναι, to him that needeth*, then must he that hath an estate be careful to preserve it for the same good purpose. Eph. iv. 28.

It is his business to cultivate his mind with knowledge, with generous dispositions, with all worthy accomplishments befitting his condition, and qualifying him for honourable action; so that he may excel, and bear himself above the vulgar level, no less in real inward worth, than in exterior garb; that he be not a gentleman merely in name or show.

It is his business (and that no slight or easy business[a]) to eschew the vices, to check the passions, to withstand the temptations, to which his condition is liable; taking heed that his wealth, honour, and power do not betray him unto pride, insolence, or contempt of his poorer brethren; unto injustice or oppression; unto luxury and riotous excess; unto sloth, stupidity, forgetfulness of God, and irreligious profaneness.

It is a business especially incumbent on him to be careful of his ways, that they may have good influence on others, who are apt to look upon him as their guide and pattern.

[a] Ardua res hæc est, opibus non tradere mores.— [Mart. XI. 5, 3.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

He should labour and study to be a leader unto virtue, and a notable promoter thereof; directing and exciting men thereto by his exemplary conversation; encouraging them by his countenance and authority; rewarding the goodness of meaner people by his bounty and favour: he should be such a gentleman as Noah, who preached righteousness by his words and works before a profane world.

2 Pet. ii. 5.

Such particular affairs hath every person of quality, credit, wealth, and interest, allotted to him by God, and laid on him as duties; the which to discharge faithfully, will enough employ a man, and doth require industry, much care, much pains; excluding sloth and negligence: so that it is impossible for a sluggard to be a worthy gentleman, virtuously disposed, a charitable neighbour, a good patriot, a good husband of his estate; any thing of that, to which God, by setting him in such a station, doth call him.

Thus is a gentleman obliged to industry in respect of God, who justly doth exact those labours of piety, charity, and all virtue from him. Further,

2 He hath also obligations to mankind, demanding industry from him, upon accounts of common humanity, equity, and ingenuity; for

How can he fairly subsist upon the common industry of mankind, without bearing a share thereof? How can he well satisfy himself to dwell statelily, to feed daintily, to be finely clad, to maintain a pompous retinue, merely upon the sweat and toil of others, without himself rendering a compensation, or making some competent returns of care and pain, redounding to the good of his neighbour?

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

How can he justly claim, or reasonably expect from the world the respect agreeable to his rank, if he doth not by worthy performances conduce to the benefit of it? Can men be obliged to regard those, from whom they receive no good?

If no gentleman be tied to serve the public, or to yield help in sustaining the common burdens, and supplying the needs of mankind, then is the whole order merely a burden, and an offence to the world; a race of drones, a pack of ciphers in the commonwealth, standing for nothing, deserving no consideration or regard: and if any are bound, then all are; for why should the whole burden lie on some, while others are exempted?

It is indeed supposed, that all are bound thereto, seeing that all have recompenses publicly allowed to them upon such considerations; divers respects and privileges peculiar to the order, grounded upon this supposition, that they deserve such advantages by conferring notable benefit to the public; the which indeed it were an arrogance to seek, and an iniquity to accept for doing nothing.

It is an insufferable pride for any man to pretend or conceit himself to differ so much from his brethren, that he may be allowed to live in ease and sloth, while the rest of mankind are subject to continual toil and trouble. Moreover,

3 A gentleman is bound to be industrious for his own sake; it is a duty which he oweth to himself, to his honour, to his interest, to his welfare. He cannot without industry continue like himself, or maintain the honour and repute becoming his quality and state, or secure himself from contempt and disgrace; for to be honourable and slothful are

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

things inconsistent, seeing honour doth not grow, nor can subsist, without undertaking worthy designs, constantly pursuing them, and happily achieving them; it is the fruit and reward of such actions, which are not performed with ease.

External respect and a semblance of honour, for the sake of public order, may be due to an exterior rank or title: but to pay this, is not to honour the person, but his title; because it is supposed, that men of real worth and use do bear it; or lest, by refusing it to one, the whole order may seem disrespected: but yet true honour, or mental esteem, is not due upon such accounts; nor is it possible to render it unto any person, who doth not by worthy qualities and good deeds appear to merit it.

Nor can a gentleman without industry uphold his real interests against the attempts of envy, of treachery, of flattery, of sycophantry, of avarice, to which his condition is obnoxious: to preserve his wealth and estate, which are the supports of his quality, he must endure care and pains; otherwise he will by greedy harpies and crafty lurchers be rifled or cozened of his substance; it will of itself go to wreck, and be embezzled by negligence.

He cannot without industry guard his personal welfare from manifold inconveniences, molestations, and mischiefs; idleness itself will be very troublesome and irksome to him. His time will lie upon his hands, as a pestering incumbrance. His mind will be infested with various distractions and distempers; vain and sad thoughts, foul lusts, and unquiet passions will spring up therein, as weeds in a neglected soil. His body will languish and become destitute of health, of vigour, of activity,

Digitized by Google

for want of due exercise. All the mischiefs, which naturally do spring from sloth and stupidity will seize upon him.

4 Thus, upon various accounts, a gentleman is engaged to business, and concerned to exercise industry therein: we may add, that indeed the very nature of gentility, or the true notion of a gentleman, doth imply so much.

For what, I pray, is a gentleman, what properties hath he, what qualities are characteristical or peculiar to him, whereby he is distinguished from others, and raised above the vulgar? Are they not especially two, courage and courtesy? which he that wanteth is not otherwise than equivocally a gentleman, as an image or a carcass is a man; without which, gentility in a conspicuous degree is no more than a vain show or an empty name: and these plainly do involve industry, do exclude slothfulness; for courage doth prompt boldly to undertake, and resolutely to despatch great enterprises and employments of difficulty: it is not seen in a flaunting garb, or strutting deportment; not in hectorly, ruffian-like swaggering or huffing; not in high looks or big words; but in stout and gallant deeds, employing vigour of mind and heart to achieve them: how can a man otherwise approve himself for courageous, than by signalizing himself in such a way?

And for courtesy, how otherwise can it be well displayed than in sedulous activity for the good of men? It surely doth not consist in modish forms of address, or complimental expressions, or hollow professions, commonly void of meaning, or of sincerity; but in real performances of beneficence,

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

when occasion doth invite, and in waiting for opportunities to do good; the which practice is accompanied with some care and pain, adding a price to it; for an easy courtesy is therefore small, because easy, and may be deemed to proceed rather from ordinary humanity, than from gentle disposition; so that, in fine, he alone doth appear truly a gentleman, who hath the heart to undergo hard tasks for public good, and willingly taketh pains to oblige his neighbours and friends.

5 The work indeed of gentlemen is not so gross, but it may be as smart and painful as any other. For all hard work is not manual; there are other instruments of action beside the plough, the spade, the hammer, the shuttle: nor doth every work produce sweat, and visible tiring of body: the head may work hard in contrivance of good designs; the tongue may be very active in dispensing advice, persuasion, comfort, and edification in virtue; a man may bestir himself in going about to do good: these are works employing the cleanly industry of a gentleman.

6 In such works it was, that the truest and greatest pattern of gentility that ever was, did employ himself. Who was that? Even our Lord himself; for he had no particular trade or profession: no man can be more loose from any engagement to the world than he was; no man had less need of business or pains-taking than he; for he had a vast estate, being *Heir of all things*, all the world being at his disposal; yea, infinitely more, it being in his power with a word to create whatever he would to serve his need or satisfy his pleasure; omnipotency being his treasure and

Acts x. 38.

Heb. i. 2.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

supply; he had a retinue of angels to wait on him, and minister to him; whatever sufficiency any man can fancy to himself to dispense with his taking pains, that had he in a far higher degree: yet did he find work for himself, and continually was employed in performing service to God, and imparting benefits to men; nor was ever industry exercised upon earth comparable to his. Isai. lii. 11.

Gentlemen therefore would do well to make him the pattern of their life, to whose industry they must be beholden for their salvation: in order whereto we recommend them to his grace. And proceed to the other sort of persons, whom we did propound, namely

II. Scholars; and that on them particularly great engagements do lie to be industrious, is most evident from various considerations.

The nature and design of this calling doth suppose industry; the matter and extent of it doth require industry; the worth of it doth highly deserve industry. We are in special gratitude to God, in charity to men, in due regard to ourselves, bound unto it.

1 First, I say, the nature and design of our calling doth suppose industry: *There is,* saith the divine Preacher, *a man whose labour is in wisdom, in knowledge, and in equity.* Such men are scholars; so that we are indeed no scholars, but absurd usurpers of the name, if we are not laborious; for what is a scholar, but one who retireth his person, and avocateth his mind from other occupations, and worldly entertainments, that he may σχολάζειν, *vacare studiis,* employ his mind and leisure on study and learning, in the search of truth, the Eccles. ii. 21.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

quest of knowledge, the improvement of his reason[b]? Wherefore an idle scholar, a lazy student, a sluggish man of learning is nonsense.

What is learning, but a diligent attendance to instruction of masters, skilled in any knowledge, and conveying their notions to us in word or writing?

What is study, but an earnest, steady, persevering application of mind to some matter, on which we fix our thoughts, with intent to see through it? What in Solomon's language are these scholastic occupations, but inclining the ear, and applying our
Prov. ii. 2; heart to understanding? than which commonly there is nothing more laborious, more straining nature, and more tiring our spirits; whence it is well compared to the most painful exercises of body and soul. The Wise Man, advising men to seek wisdom, the which is the proper design of our calling, doth intimate that work to be like digging in the mines for silver, and like searching all about for concealed treasure; than which there can hardly be any more difficult and painful
ii. 4, 5; task: *If*, saith he, *thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand.* Otherwhere he compareth the same work to assiduous watching and waiting, like that of a guard or a client, which are the greatest instances of diligence; *Blessed*, saith he, (or Wis-
viii. 34. dom by him saith, *Blessed*) *is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*

Wherefore, if we will approve ourselves to be what we are called, and what we pretend to be;

[b] Ἡ σοφία γραμματέως ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς.—Ecclus. xxxviii. 24.

Digitized by Google

if we will avoid being impostors, assuming a name not due to us, we must not be slothful. Further,

2 The matter and extent of our business doth require industry from us: the matter of it, which is truth and knowledge; the extent, which is very large and comprehensive, taking in all truth, all knowledge, worthy our study, and useful for the designs of it.

Our business is to find truth; the which, even in matters of high importance, is not easily to be discovered; being as a vein of silver, encompassed with earth and mixed with dross, deeply laid in the obscurity of things, wrapt up in false appearances, entangled with objections, and perplexed with debates; being therefore not readily discoverable, especially by minds clouded with prejudices, lusts, passions, partial affections, appetites of honour and interest; whence to descry it requireth the most curious observation and solicitous circumspection that can be; together with great pains in the preparation and purgation of our minds toward the inquiry of it.

Our business is to attain knowledge, not concerning obvious and vulgar matters, but about sublime, abstruse, intricate, and knotty subjects, remote from common observation and sense; to get sure and exact notions about which will try the best forces of our mind with their utmost endeavours; in firmly settling principles, in strictly deducing consequences, in orderly digesting conclusions, in faithfully retaining what we learn by our contemplation and study.

And if to get a competent knowledge about a few things, or to be reasonably skilful in any sort

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

of learning, be difficult, how much industry doth it require to be well seen in many, or to have waded through the vast compass of learning, in no part whereof a scholar may conveniently or handsomely be ignorant; seeing there is such a connexion of things, and dependence of notions, that one part of learning doth confer light to another, that a man can hardly well understand any thing without knowing divers other things; that he will be a lame scholar, who hath not an insight into many kinds of knowledge; that he can hardly be a good scholar, who is not a general one.

To understand so many languages, which are the shells of knowledge; to comprehend so many sciences, full of various theorems and problems; to peruse so many histories of ancient and modern times; to know the world, both natural and human; to be acquainted with the various inventions, inquiries, opinions, and controversies of learned men; to skill the arts of expressing our mind, and imparting our conceptions with advantage, so as to instruct or persuade others; these are works indeed, which will exercise and strain all our faculties (our reason, our fancy, our memory) in painful study.

The knowledge of such things is not innate to us; it doth not of itself spring up in our minds; it is not any ways incident by chance, or infused by grace, (except rarely by miracle;) common observation doth not produce it; it cannot be purchased at any rate, except by that, for which it was said of old, the gods sell all things, that is for pains[c]; without which, the best wit and greatest capacity may not render a man learned, as the best soil will not

[c] Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.

Digitized by Google

yield good fruit or grain, if they be not planted or sown therein. SERM. XLVII.

Consider, if you please, what a scholar Solomon was: beside his skill in Politics, which was his principal faculty and profession, whereby he did with admirable dexterity and prudence manage the affairs of that great kingdom, judging his people, and discerning what was good and bad; accurately dispensing justice; settling his country in a most flourishing state of peace, order, plenty, and wealth; largely extending his territory; so that his wisdom of this kind was famous over the earth: beside, I say, this civil wisdom, he had an exquisite skill in Natural Philosophy and Medicine; for, *He spake of trees,* or plants, *from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.*

1 Kings iii. 9; iv. 20, 25; x. 27; iv. 21, &c. x. 6, 24; iv. 33;

He was well versed in Mathematics; for it is said, *Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east-country, and all the wisdom of Egypt;* the wisdom of which nations did consist in those sciences. And for his mechanic skill he left for a monument the most glorious structure that ever stood on earth.

iv. 30;

He was very skilful in Poetry and Music; for he did himself compose above a thousand songs; whereof one yet extant declareth the loftiness of his fancy, the richness of his vein, and the elegancy of his style.

iv. 32.

He had great ability in Rhetoric; according to that in Wisdom, *God granted me to speak as I would;* and that in Ecclesiastes, *The preacher sought to find out acceptable words;* a great instance

Wisd. vii. 15. Eccles. xii. 10. 1 Kings viii.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

of which faculty we have in that admirable prayer of his composure at the dedication of the Temple.

He did wonderfully excel in Ethics; concerning which, *He spake three thousand proverbs*, or moral aphorisms; and *Moreover*, saith Ecclesiastes, *because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs;* the which did contain a great variety of notable observations, and useful directions for common life, couched in pithy expressions.

1 Kings iv. 32.

Eccles. xii. 9.

As for Theology, as the study of that was the chief study to which he exhorteth others, (as to the head, or principal part, of wisdom,) so questionless he was himself most conversant therein; for proof whereof he did leave so many excellent theorems and precepts of Divinity to us.

Prov. ii. 5, &c.

In fine, there is no sort of knowledge, to which he did not apply his study; witness himself in those words, *I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven.*

Eccles. i. 13;

Such a scholar was he; and such if we have a noble ambition to be, we must use the course he did; which was, first, in his heart to prefer wisdom before all worldly things; then to pray to God for it, or for his blessing in our quest of it; then, to use the means of attaining it, diligent searching and hard study; for that was his method he telleth us; *I*, saith he, *applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things.*

vii. 25.

Such considerations shew the necessity of industry for a scholar. But,

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

3 The worth, and excellency, and great utility, together with the pleasantness of his vocation, deserving the highest industry, do superadd much obligation thereto.

We are much bound to be diligent out of ingenuity, and in gratitude to God, who by his gracious providence hath assigned to us a calling so worthy, an employment so comfortable, a way of life no less commodious, beneficial, and delightful to ourselves, than serviceable to God, and useful for the world.

If we had our option and choice, what calling could we desire before this of any whereto men are affixed? How could we better employ our mind, or place our labour, or spend our time, or pass our pilgrimage in this world, than in scholastical occupations?

It were hard to reckon up, or to express, the numberless great advantages of this calling: I shall therefore only touch some, which readily fall under my thought, recommending its value to us.

It is a calling, the design whereof conspireth with the general end of our being; the perfection of our nature in its endowments, and the fruition of it in its best operations.

It is a calling, which doth not employ us in bodily toil, in worldly care, in pursuit of trivial affairs, in sordid drudgeries; but in those angelical operations of soul, the contemplation of truth, and attainment of wisdom; which are the worthiest exercises of our reason, and sweetest entertainments of our mind; the most precious wealth, and most beautiful ornaments of our soul; whereby our faculties are improved, are polished and refined, are

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

enlarged in their power and use by habitual accessions: the which are conducible to our own greatest profit and benefit, as serving to rectify our wills, to compose our affections, to guide our lives in the ways of virtue, to bring us unto felicity.

Prov. ii. 4, 10, 11.

It is a calling, which, being duly followed, will most sever us from the vulgar sort of men, and advance us above the common pitch; enduing us with light to see further than other men, disposing us to affect better things, and to slight those meaner objects of human desire, on which men commonly dote; freeing us from the erroneous conceits and from the perverse affections of common people. It is said, Διπλοῦν ὁρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα, *Men of learning are double-sighted*[d]: but it is true, that in many cases they see infinitely further than a vulgar sight doth reach; and if a man by serious study doth acquire a clear and solid judgment of things, so as to assign to each its due weight and price; if he accordingly be inclined in his heart to affect and pursue them; if, from clear and right notions of things, a meek and ingenuous temper of mind, a command and moderation of passions, a firm integrity, and a cordial love of goodness do spring, he thereby becometh another kind of thing, much different from those brutish men (beasts of the people) who blindly follow the motions of their sensual appetite, or the suggestions of their fancy, or their mistaken prejudices.

It is a calling which hath these considerable advantages, that, by virtue of improvement therein, we can see with our own eyes, and guide ourselves by our own reasons, not being led blindfold about,

[d] [Menand. Sentent. Sing. p. 336. Ed. Meinek.]

Digitized by Google

or depending precariously on the conduct of others, in matters of highest concern to us; that we are exempted from giddy credulity, from wavering levity, from fond admiration of persons and things, being able to distinguish of things, and to settle our judgments about them, and to get an intimate acquaintance with them, assuring to us their true nature and worth; that we are also thereby rescued from admiring ourselves, and that overweening self-conceitedness, of which the Wise Man saith, *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.* Prov. xxvi. 16.

It is a calling, whereby we are qualified and enabled to do God service; to gratify his desires, to promote his honour, to advance his interests; to render his name glorious in the world, by teaching, maintaining, and propagating his truth; by persuading men to render their due love, reverence, and obedience to him; than which we can have no more honourable or satisfactory employment; more like to that of the glorious and blessed spirits.

It is a calling, the due prosecution whereof doth ingratiate us with God, and procureth his favour; rendering us fit objects of his love, and entitling us thereto in regard to our qualities, and recompense of our works: for, *God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom:* and, *So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.* Wisd. vii. 28. Ps. v. 5. Prov. iii. 4.

It is a calling, whereby with greatest advantage we may benefit men, and deserve well of the world; drawing men to the knowledge and service of God, reclaiming them from error and sin, rescuing them from misery, and conducting them to happiness;

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

by clear instruction, by faithful admonition, by powerful exhortation. And what can be more noble, than to be the lights of the world, the guides of practice to men, the authors of so much good, so egregious benefactors to mankind?

It is a calling most exempt from the cares, the crosses, the turmoils, the factious jars, the anxious intrigues, the vexatious molestations of the world; its business lying out of the road of those mischiefs, wholly lying in solitary retirement, or being transacted in the most innocent and ingenuous company.

It is a calling least subject to any danger or disappointment; wherein we may well be assured not to miscarry or lose our labour; for the merchant, indeed, by manifold accidents may lose his voyage, or find a bad market; the husbandman may plough and sow in vain: but the student hardly can fail of improving his stock, and reaping a good crop of knowledge; especially if he study with a conscientious mind, and pious reverence to God, imploring his gracious help and blessing.

It is a calling, the industry used wherein doth abundantly recompense itself, by the pleasure and sweetness which it carrieth in it; so that the more pains one taketh, the more delight he findeth, feeling himself proportionably to grow in knowledge, and that his work becometh continually more easy to him.

It is a calling, the business whereof doth so exercise as not to weary, so entertain as not to cloy us; being not (as other occupations are) a drawing in a mill, or a nauseous tedious repetition of the same work; but a continued progress toward fresh objects; our mind not being staked to one or

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

a few poor matters, but having immense fields of contemplation, wherein it may everlastingly expatiate, with great proficiency and pleasure[e].

It is a calling, which doth ever afford plentiful fruit, even in regard to the conveniences of this present and temporal state; the which sufficiently will requite the pains expended thereon: for if we be honestly industrious, we shall not want success; and succeeding we shall not want a competence of wealth, of reputation, of interest in the world: for concerning wisdom, which is the result of honest study, the Wise Man telleth us, *Riches and honour are with her, yea, durable riches and righteousness: Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour: Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.* In common experience the wealth of the mind doth qualify for employments, which have good recompenses annexed to them; and neither God nor man will suffer him long to want, who is endowed with worthy accomplishments of knowledge. It was a ridiculous providence in Nero, that if he should chance to lose his empire, he might live by fiddling: yet his motto was good; and Dionysius, another tyrant, found the benefit of it; Τὸ τεχνίον πᾶσα γαῖα τρέφει[f], he that hath

Prov. viii. 18; iii. 16.

iv. 8, 9.

[e] Γηράσκω δ' ἀεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος.—[Solon apud Plut. Opp. Tom. I. p. 382. Ed. Reisk. Cf. Plat. Lach. 189 A. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐγὼ τῷ Σόλωνι, ἓν μόνον προσλαβών, ξυγχωρῶ· γηράσκων γὰρ πολλὰ διδάσκεσθαι ἐθέλω ὑπὸ χρηστῶν μόνον.]

[f] [Prædictum a mathematicis Neroni olim erat, fore ut quandoque destitueretur; unde illa vox ejus celeberrima,—Τὸ τεχνίον πᾶσα γαῖα τρέφει.—Sueton. Nero. cap. XL.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

any good art, hath therein an estate, and land in every place; he is secured against being reduced to extremity of any misfortune: *Wisdom*, saith the Wise Man, *is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it:* money is a defence, of which fortune may bereave us; but wisdom is beyond its attacks, being a treasure seated in a place inaccessible to external impressions.

Eccl. vii. 12.

And as a learned man cannot be destitute of substance; so he cannot want credit[s], having such an ornament, than which none hath a more general estimation; and which can be of low rate only among that sort of folk, to whom Solomon saith, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?—and fools hate knowledge?* It is that which recommendeth a man in all company, and procureth regard, every one yielding attention and acceptance to instructive, neat, apposite discourse, (that which the Scripture calleth acceptable, pleasant, gracious words;) men think themselves obliged thereby by receiving information and satisfaction from it; and accordingly, *Every man*, saith the Wise Man, *shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer;* and,—*For the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend;* and, *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious.* It is that an eminency wherein purchaseth lasting fame, and a life after death, in the good memory and opinion of posterity: *Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from*

Prov. i. 22, 7; xxii. 17.

xxiv. 26; xxii. 11.

Eccles. x. 12.

Ecclus. xxxix. 9.

[s] *A man shall be commmended according to his wisdom.*—Prov. xii. 8.

Digitized by Google

generation to generation. A fame no less great, and far more innocent, than acts of chivalry and martial prowess; for is not Aristotle as renowned for teaching the world with his pen, as Alexander for conquering it with his sword? Is not one far oftener mentioned than the other? Do not men hold themselves much more obliged to the learning of the philosopher, than to the valour of the warrior? Indeed the fame of all others is indebted to the pains of the scholar, and could not subsist but with and by his fame: *Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori*[h]; learning consecrateth itself and its subject together to immortal remembrance. SERM. XLVII.

It is a calling that fitteth a man for all conditions and fortunes; so that he can enjoy prosperity with moderation, and sustain adversity with comfort: he that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes.

In fine, it is a calling, which Solomon, who had curiously observed and exactly compared and scanned, by reason and by experience, all other occupations and ways of life, did prefer above all others; and we may presume would sooner have parted with his royal state, than with his learning; for, *Wisdom*, saith he, *is the principal thing,* Prov. iv. 7. *therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding;* and, *Then I saw* (then, that is, Eccles. ii. after a serious disquisition and discussion of things, *I saw*) *that wisdom excelleth folly* (that is, 13.

[h] [Hor. Carm. iv. 8. 28.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

knowledge excelleth ignorance) *as light excelleth darkness.*

These things and much more may be said of learning in general; but if more distinctly we survey each part, and each object of it, we shall find that each doth yield considerable emoluments and delights; benefit to our soul, advantage to our life, satisfaction to our mind.

The observation of things, and collection of experiments, how doth it enrich the mind with ideas, and breed a kind of familiar acquaintance with all things, so that nothing doth surprise us, or strike our mind with astonishment and admira-

Eccles. i. 8.

tion! And if our eye be not satisfied with seeing, nor our ear filled with hearing, how much less is our mind satiated with the pleasures of speculating and observing that immense variety of objects subject to its view!

The exercise of our mind in rational discursiveness about things, in quest of truth; canvassing questions, examining arguments for and against; how greatly doth it better us, fortifying our natural parts, enabling us to fix our thoughts on objects without roving, inuring us to weigh and resolve, and judge well about matters proposed; preserving us from being easily abused by captious fallacies, gulled by specious pretences, tossed about with every doubt or objection started before us!

Invention of any kind (in discerning the causes of abstruse effects, in resolving hard problems, in demonstrating theorems, in framing composures of witty description, or forcible persuasion,) how much doth it exceed the pleasure of hunting for any game, or of combating for any victory! Do any

Digitized by Google

man's children so much please him, as these creatures of his brain?

The reading of books, what is it but conversing with the wisest men of all ages and all countries, who thereby communicate to us their most deliberate thoughts, choicest notions, and best inventions, couched in good expression, and digested in exact method?

And as to the particular matters or objects of study, all have their use and pleasure. I shall only touch them.

The very initial studies of tongues and grammatical literature are very profitable and necessary, as the inlets to knowledge, whereby we are enabled to understand wise men speaking their sense in their own terms and lively strain, whereby especially we are assisted to drink sacred knowledge out of the fountains, the divine Oracles. Luther would not part with a little Hebrew he had for all the Turkish Empire.

Rhetoric, or the art of conveying our thoughts to others by speech with advantages of clearness, force, and elegancy, so as to instruct, to persuade, to delight the auditors; of how great benefit is it, if it be well used! How much may it conduce to the service of God, and edification of men! What hath been a more effectual instrument of doing good, and working wonders not only in the world, but in the Church? How many souls have been converted from error, vanity, and vice, to truth, soberness, and virtue, by an eloquent Apollos[1], a Basil, a Chrysostom?

[1] Ἀνὴρ λόγιος .... δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς.—Acts xviii. 24.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

The perusal of History, how pleasant illumination of mind, how useful direction of life, how sprightly incentives to virtue doth it afford! How doth it supply the room of experience, and furnish us with prudence at the expense of others, informing us about the ways of action, and the consequences thereof by examples, without our own danger or trouble! How may it instruct and encourage us in piety, while therein we trace the paths of God in men, or observe the methods of divine Providence, how the Lord and Judge of the world in due season protecteth, prospereth, blesseth, rewardeth innocence and integrity; how he crosseth, defeateth, blasteth, curseth, punisheth iniquity and outrage; managing things with admirable temper of wisdom, to the good of mankind, and advancement of his own glory!

The Mathematical Sciences, how pleasant is the speculation of them to the mind! How useful is the practice to common life! How do they whet and excite the mind! How do they inure it to strict reasoning and patient meditation!

Natural Philosophy, the contemplation of this great theatre, or visible system presented before us; observing the various appearances therein, and inquiring into their causes; reflecting on the order, connexion, and harmony of things; considering their original source, and their final design: how doth it enlarge our minds, and advance them above vulgar amusements, and the admiration of those petty things, about which men cark and bicker! How may it serve to work in us pious affections of admiration, reverence, and love toward our great Creator, whose eternal divinity is

Rom. i. 20.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

clearly seen, whose glory is declared, whose transcendent perfections and attributes of immense power, wisdom, and goodness, are conspicuously displayed, whose particular kindness toward us men doth evidently shine in those his works of nature! Psal. xix. 1; viii.

The study of Moral Philosophy, how exceedingly beneficial may it be to us, suggesting to us the dictates of reason, concerning the nature and faculties of our soul, the chief good and end of our life, the way and means of attaining happiness, the best rules and methods of practice; the distinctions between good and evil, the nature of each virtue, and motives to embrace it; the rank wherein we stand in the world, and the duties proper to our relations: by rightly understanding and estimating which things we may know how to behave ourselves decently and soberly toward ourselves, justly and prudently toward our neighbours; we may learn to correct our inclinations, to regulate our appetites, to moderate our passions, to govern our actions, to conduct and wield all our practice well in prosecution of our end; so as to enjoy our being and conveniences of life in constant quiet and peace, with tranquillity and satisfaction of mind!

But especially the study of Theology, how numberless, unexpressible advantages doth it yield! For

It enlighteneth our minds with the best knowledge concerning the most high and worthy objects, in order to the most happy end, with the firmest assurance.

It certainly and perfectly doth inform us concerning the nature and attributes, the will

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

and intentions, the works and providence of God.

It fully declareth to us our own nature, our original, our designed end, our whole duty, our certain way of attaining eternal life and felicity.

It exactly teacheth us how we should demean ourselves in all respects piously toward God, justly and charitably toward our neighbour, soberly toward ourselves; without blame in the world, with satisfaction of our conscience, with assured hope of blessed rewards.

It proposeth those encouragements, and exhibiteth assurances of those helps, which serve potently to engage us in all good practice.

It setteth before us a most complete and lively pattern of all goodness; apt most clearly to direct, most strongly to excite, most obligingly to engage us thereto; especially instructing and inclining to the practice of the most high and hard duties, meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, contempt of all worldly vanities.

1 Pet. i. 12. Titus iii. 4.

It discovereth those sublime mysteries and stupendous wonders of grace, whereby God hath demonstrated an incomprehensible kindness to mankind, and our obligation to correspondent gratitude.

It representeth manifold arguments and incentives to love God with most intense affection, to confide in him with most firm assurance, to delight

1 Pet. i. 8.

in him continually with joy unspeakable; which are the noblest, the sweetest, the happiest operations of our soul.

2 Cor. iv. 18.

It reareth our hearts from vain thoughts, and mean desires concerning these poor, transitory,

Digitized by Google

earthly things, to contemplations, affections, and hopes toward objects most excellent, eternal, and celestial. SERM. XLVII.

It engageth us to study the Book of God, the Book of Books, the richest mine of most excellent knowledge, containing infallible oracles of truth, and heavenly rules of life; *Which are able to make us wise to salvation, and perfect to every good work.* 2 Tim. iii. 15. Ps. xix. 10.

And how can we otherwise be so well employed, as in meditation about such things? What occupation doth nearer approach to that of the blessed angels? What heaven is there upon earth like to that of constantly feasting our minds and hearts in the contemplation of such objects? Especially considering, that this study doth not only yield private benefit to ourselves in forwarding our own salvation, but enableth us by our guidance and encouragement to promote the eternal welfare of others, and by our endeavours to people heaven, according to that exhortation of St Paul pressing on Timothy this study with diligence: *Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16.

So considerable is each part of learning, so extremely profitable are some parts of it; indeed the skill of any liberal art is valuable, as a handsome ornament, as an harmless divertisement, as an useful instrument upon occasions; as preferable to all other accomplishments and advantages of person or fortune, (beauty, strength, wealth, power, or the like;) for who would not purchase any kind of such

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

knowledge at any rate; who would sell it for any price; who would not choose rather to be deformed or impotent in his body, than to have a misshapen and weak mind; to have rather a lank purse, than an empty brain; to have no title at all, than no worth to bear it out? If any would, he is not of Solomon's mind; for of wisdom (by which he meaneth a comprehension of all knowledge, divine and human; into which the knowledge of natural things, of Mathematics, of Poetry, are reckoned ingredients) he saith, *The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Her fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold; and her revenue than choice silver.*

1 Kings iv. 29—34.

Prov. iii. 14; viii. 11; viii. 19; xvi. 16; xx. 15; iv. 7;

Now then, considering all these advantages of our calling, if we by our negligence or sluggishness therein do lose them, are we not very ingrateful to God; who gave them, as with a gracious intent for our good, so with expectation that we should improve them to his service? If God had allotted to us the calling of rustics, or of artificers, we had been impious in not diligently following it; but we are abominably ingrateful in neglecting this most incomparably excellent vocation.

Are we not extremely defective to ourselves, if indulging a wretched humour of laziness we will not enjoy those sweet pleasures, nor embrace those great profits to which God in mercy calleth us? If Solomon said true, *He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul, he that keepeth understanding shall find good*; how little friends are we to ourselves,

xix. 8.

Digitized by Google

how neglectful of our own welfare, by not using the means of getting wisdom! SERM. XLVII.

The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge, saith Solomon; what a fool then is he that shunneth it! who, though it be his way, and his special duty to seek it, yet neglecteth it; choosing rather to do nothing, or to do worse. Prov. xv. 14.

And do we not deserve great blame, displeasure, and disgrace from mankind, if, having such opportunities of qualifying ourselves to do good, and serve the public, we by our idleness render ourselves worthless and useless?

How, being slothful in our business, can we answer for our violating the wills, for abusing the goodness, for perverting the charity and bounty of our worthy founders and benefactors, who gave us the good things we enjoy, not to maintain us in idleness, but for supports and encouragements of our industry? how can we excuse ourselves from dishonesty, and perfidious dealing, seeing that we are admitted to these enjoyments under condition, and upon confidence (confirmed by our free promises and most solemn engagements) of using them according to their pious intent, that is, in a diligent prosecution of our studies; in order to the service of God, and of the public?

Let every scholar, when he misspendeth an hour, or sluggeth on his bed, but imagine that he heareth the voice of those glorious kings, or venerable prelates, or worthy gentlemen, complaining thus, and rating him: Why, sluggard, dost thou against my will possess my estate? why dost thou presume to occupy the place due to an industrious person? why dost thou forget or despise thy obligations to

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVII.

my kindness? thou art an usurper, a robber, or a purloiner of my goods, which I never intended for such as thee; I challenge thee of wrong to myself, and of sacrilege toward my God, to whose service I devoted those his gifts to me.

How reproachful will it be to us, if that expostulation may concern us, *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?*

Prov. xvii. 16.

If to be a dunce or a bungler in any profession be shameful, how much more ignominious and infamous to a scholar to be such! from whom all men expect that he should excel in intellectual abilities, and be able to help others by his instruction and advice.

Nothing surely would more grate on the heart of one that hath a spark of ingenuity, of modesty, of generous good nature, than to be liable to such an imputation

To avoid it therefore, (together with all the guilt and all the mischiefs attending on sloth,) let each of us, in God's name, carefully mind his business; and let the grace and blessing of God prosper you therein. Amen.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLVIII.

THE UNSEARCHABLENESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

ROMANS XI. 33.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

THESE words are the close of a disputation, wherein St Paul was engaged with the advocates of Judaism, concerning God's providence toward his ancient people, in rejecting the greatest part of them, upon their refusal to embrace the Christian doctrine; and in admitting the Gentile world to favour upon its compliance with the overtures thereof proposed in the Gospel. In this proceeding those infidels could not discern God's hand, nor would allow such a dispensation worthy of him, advancing several exceptions against it: God, said they, having espoused and consecrated us to himself; having to our fathers*, in regard to their piety, made so absolute promises of benediction on their posterity; having consequently endowed us with such privileges and choice pledges of his favour; having taken so much pains with

SERM. XLVIII.

* Having so indented with our fathers as, in reward of their piety, to make to them absolute promises of benediction upon their posterity. MS.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

us, and performed so great things in our behalf; having so long avowed, supported, and cherished us; how can it well consist with his wisdom, with his justice, with his fidelity, with his constancy, thus instantly to abandon and repudiate us? Doth not this dealing argue his former affections to have been misplaced? Doth it not implead his ancient covenant and law of imperfection? Doth it not supplant his own designs, and unravel all that he for so many ages hath been doing? Upon such accounts did this dispensation appear very strange and scandalous to them: but St Paul, being infallibly assured of its truth, doth undertake to vindicate it from all misprisions, rendering a fair account of it, and assigning for it many satisfactory reasons*,

---

* But the Apostle being infallibly assured of its truth, doth undertake to vindicate it from all misprisions, rendering a fair account of it, and assigning for it many satisfactory reasons; such as these.

1 That God never was, nor could be tied to dispense grace and mercy to any of his creatures in any other way, or upon other terms, than such as he should freely choose and think fit to appoint.

Rom. ix. 18. Jer. xviii. 6.

2 That it was most just, suitable to the Divine attributes, and necessary according to the immutable reason of the case, that those who would not close with his terms, or who would not submit to his will, should be rejected from grace; those who did embrace and comply with them, should be accepted.

Rom. ix. 22; xi. 22.

3 That the terms and overtures propounded by God (the terms of faith and obedience, the overtures of mercy and grace, upon compliance with those terms) were in themselves equal, reasonable, becoming God, befitting man, and agreeable to the tenor of Holy Scripture; but that the way, which they pretended to establish in opposition thereto

ix. 30; x. 5, 11.

Digitized by Google

drawn from the general equity of the case, from the nature of God, his attributes, and his relations SERM. XLVIII.

(the way of legal righteousness, excluding faith and pardon thereby) was harsh, impracticable, unsuitable to the state and needs of mankind, dishonourable to God, and dissonant to his revealed will. Rom. iii. 9; xi. 32. Gal. iii. 10, 22. Rom. iv. 2.

4 That God never absolutely did intend, or had promised to keep the whole nation of the Jews in special favour with him; but only those who by faith and obedience should approve themselves genuine children of Abraham. ix. 6, &c. ii. 28. Gal. iii. 7.

5 That God had not totally deserted the nation; nor had his intentions and promises to Abraham, even in regard to his temporal seed, been wholly frustrated; for that divers of them, a considerable remnant, among whom St Paul himself was one, had embraced the Gospel, and thereby did stand firm in possession of God's favour; God having foreseen their willingness to comply with him, and having therefore, in dispensation of mercy to them, determined to preserve his gracious regard to Abraham's posterity. Rom. ix. 6, 29; xi. 1, 28; iii. 3; xi. 2.

6 That, indeed, God had not so much as deserted any one of them, having exhibited general invitations to compliance, whereby all were put into capacity of retaining or recovering his favour. Rom. xi. 2, 23. Heb. iv. 1.

7 That God with abundant patience did wait for their conversion, indulging them competent means, and powerful motives to draw them thereto; there being also no urgent temptation on them to refuse so equal and easy terms. Rom. ix. 22; ii. 4.

8 That in consequence to these things, their fall was not to be charged on God's want of faithfulness, of constancy, of kindness toward them; but to their affected blindness and stupidity; their wilful perverseness and obduration, their fond presumption and arrogance; who would not apprehend God's pleasure clearly revealed, and demonstrated by cogent proofs; or being convinced would not yield submission thereto, but obstinately would persist in seeking justification by their own way of performing legal services, without regard to the mercy and grace of God exhibited in the Gospel. xi. 7, 25; ix. 22. ix. 31; x. 3; xi. 6.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

to men; from the congruity of this proceeding to the tenor of God's providence, to his most ancient

---

9 That hence it was no wise unjust, or incongruous to any attribute of God, that he should take advantage upon their stubborn infidelity and disobedience to glorify his power and justice in discarding and punishing them.

Rom. ix. 22.

10 That as to the Gentiles, his admitting them to a capacity of favour and salvation was a thing in itself most just, and worthy of God, the universal Father and gracious Lord of all men.

x. 12; iii. 29, 22;

11 That it was agreeable to the declarations, which God had promulged to the world, of regarding all indifferently, who should address themselves for mercy to him.

x. 13; ix. 24.

12 That it did suit to the true intent, and reasonable interpretation of the covenant made with Abraham; wherein a blessing was provided to all his seed: which in reason should extend to those, who in a nobler way, than by carnal propagation, were his children; namely by walking in the footsteps of his faith, and being conformable to his piety, who also by nature were allied to Christ, and by faith did adhere to him; who was principally meant to be that *Seed in which all nations should be blessed.*

iv. 11, 12, 13, 16; ix. 8. Gal. iii. 7. iii. 16.

13 That God by mystical insinuations had presignified, and by many clear prophecies had foretold the reception of the Gentiles into favour, and rejection of the Jews; whereby this dispensation appeareth correspondent to God's ancient purposes.

Rom. ix. 9, 12, 13. Gal. iv. 22. Rom. ix. 25; x. 16.

14 That this proceeding, as it was in no respect prejudicial to them, so it was beneficial as a mean of reclaiming them from their desperate course, by provoking them to emulation, reflecting on the blessings vouchsafed to the Gentiles upon their belief, and the flourishing state of the Christian Church.

Rom. x. 19; xi. 11, 31.

15 In fine, that God still did reserve favourable intentions toward them, meaning to dispense all means conducible to their recovery; which would in due time find effect so considerable, that many of them would be re-incorporated into his Church. MS.

xi. 26, 27; xi. 23, 24.

Digitized by Google

purposes, to the true intent of his promises, to his express declarations and predictions; to the state of things in the world, and the pressing needs of all mankind: such reasons (I say, which I have not time more explicitly to relate) doth the Apostle produce in favour of this great dispensation; the which did suffice to clear and justify it from all their objections: yet notwithstanding, after that he had steered his discourse through all these rocks, he thought it safe to cast anchor; winding up the contest in this modest intimation, that whatever he could say, might not perhaps exhaust the difficulty, or void all scruple; that therefore in this, and in all such cases, for entire satisfaction, we should have recourse to the incomprehensible wisdom of God, who frequently in the course of his providence doth act upon grounds, and ordereth things in methods, transcending our ability to discover or trace: to consider some causes and reasons of which incomprehensibility, and to ground thereon some practical advices, will be the scope of my discourse*: the reasons may be these:

---

* To consider the reasons of which incomprehensibility, and to ground thereon some practical advices, will be the scope of my discourse; after that I have observed somewhat concerning the words, and touched a caution about the drift of the Apostle.

The Apostle doth express the incomprehensibility of divine providence in two propositions; one is, God's judgments are unsearchable, the other, God's ways are untraceable; whereof the former may seem properly referrible to the reason of God's proceedings, the other to the manner of them: we cannot exactly discover why (according to what designs of wisdom, or what rules of justice) God acteth,

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

1 As the dealings of very wise men sometimes are founded upon maxims, and admit justifications, not obvious nor penetrable by vulgar conceit; so may God act according to rules of wisdom and justice,

---

therefore his judgments are unsearchable; we cannot perfectly discern how (in what order, at what season, by what means and instruments) God worketh, therefore His ways are untraceable; such a distinction may be conceived; but it may be questioned whether the Apostle did intend it, and did not rather mean (as is ordinary for the clearer illustration, and deeper impression of things) by variety of expression to assert the same thing; for seeing, *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;* seeing, *All the works of his hand are verity and judgment*, these words being applied to God are commonly equivalent; whence in the Revelation, *Just and true are thy ways, O thou King of Saints*, and, *Allelujah to the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments*, are acclamations of praise, importing one sense; we shall not therefore subtilize, or sever the propositions, but consider them together as jointly signifying the every way incomprehensible nature of divine providence.

Ps. cxlv. 17; xxv. 10; cii. 7.

Rev. xv. 3; xix. 2.

Again, as to the Apostle's drift, we may remark, that he doth not to reclaim or to discourage us from the contemplation of Providence; or from inquiry into the reasons or methods thereof; nor doth he mean to intimate, that we cannot ever by our search and study arrive to some pittance of knowledge about them; for his own practice sheweth, that he seriously and successfully had contemplated them, even in the present case; and in divers passages of Scripture to ponder and to understand providential dispensations, is represented to us not only as a point of special wisdom, but as matter of duty; or a practice much conducible to the promotion of divine glory, and to the production of good affections in us. There is not, indeed, any inconsistence between understanding, and not comprehending; between

Digitized by Google

which it may be quite impossible by our faculties to apprehend, or with our means to descry.

As there are natural modes of being and operation, (such as God's necessary subsistence, his

---

seeking to know somewhat, and not aspiring to know all concerning any object: for may we not touch what we cannot grasp, may we not view what we cannot survey? Is the Ocean less visible because standing on the shore we cannot descry its utmost bounds? May we not behold the Sun, because we cannot glare on him, or pierce through his deep orb of light? Doth the inexhaustibleness of a rich mine forbid us to partake of its wealth; or the perennity of a fountain hinder our drawing from it? So neither doth the incomprehensibility of Providence any wise prejudice its intelligibility, but rather doth promote it; and well may it be rather a spur than a curb to our contemplation thereof: seeing the deeper and wider it is, the further we may dive into it, the more of it we may ken; so that hence we may continually grow wiser without any stop or satiety, and may eternally become proficients in the study of it.

St Paul therefore asserting the inscrutability of Providence doth not discountenance a careful inspection thereof; or a sober inquisition into its ways; he doth not check our industry in considering it, but he quasheth our immodesty in presuming to comprehend it; teaching us, that in some cases it surpasseth our capacity to discern what God meaneth, why he acteth thus, and how he bringeth things about; for that in his proceedings there are clouds which our light cannot penetrate; there are depths which our reason cannot sound, there are knots which our wit cannot unfold.

That so it is common experience doth attest; we may oft hear men complain of it; many both good and bad, have ever been offended at it; it always will be a grand cause, why it is so difficult to satisfy a froward and to convince a profane mind; but why it is so, I come now to assign some causes. MS.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

production of things from nothing, his eternity without succession, his immensity without extension, his prescience without necessitation of events, his ever acting, but never changing; and the like,) so there may be prudential and moral rules of proceeding far above our reach; so God himself telleth us: *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Some of them we may be uncapable to know, because of our finite nature; they being peculiar objects of divine wisdom, and not to be understood by any creature: for as God cannot impart the power of doing all things possible, so may he not communicate the faculty of knowing all things intelligible; that being indeed to ungod himself, or to deprive himself of his peerless supremacy in wisdom; hence he is styled *The only wise God;* hence he is said to dwell in light inaccessible; hence he chargeth the angels with folly; hence the most illuminate Seraphims do veil their faces before him.

Isai. lv. 9.

1 Tim. i. 17.
Rom. xvi. 27.
Jude 25.
1 Tim. vi. 16.
Job iv. 18.
Isai. vi. 2.

Other such rules we may not be able to perceive from the meanness of our nature, or our low rank among creatures: for beneath omniscience there being innumerable forms of intelligence, in the lowest of these we sit, one remove from beasts; being endowed with capacities suitable to that inferior station, and to those meaner employments, for which we were designed and framed; whence our mind hath a pitch, beyond which it cannot soar; and things clearly intelligible to more noble creatures, moving in a higher orb, may be dark and unexplicable to us: *As an angel of God, so is my lord the king, to discern good and bad,* was an

Ps. ciii. 20.
2 Pet. ii. 11.

2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20; xix. 27.

Digitized by Google

expression importing this difference, how those glorious creatures do overtop us in intellectual capacities.

Also divers notions not simply passing our capacity to know, we are not yet in condition to ken, by reason of our circumstances here, in this dark corner of things, to which we are confined, and wherein we lie under many disadvantages of attaining knowledge. He that is shut up in a close place, and can only peep through chinks, who standeth in a valley, and hath his prospect intercepted, who is encompassed with fogs, who hath but a dusky light to view things by, whose eyes are weak or foul, how can he see much or far; how can he discern things remote, minute, or subtle, clearly and distinctly? Such is our case; our mind is pent up in the body, and looketh only through those clefts by which objects strike our sense; its intuition is limited within a very small compass; it resideth in an atmosphere of fancy, stuffed with exhalations from temper, appetite, passion, interest; its light is scant and faint, (for sense and experience do reach only some few gross matters of fact; light infused, and revelation imparted to us, proceed from arbitrary dispensation, in definite measures;) our ratiocination consequently from such principles must be very short and defective; nor are our minds ever thoroughly sound, or pure and defecate from prejudices; hence no wonder that now we are wholly ignorant of divers great truths, or have but a glimmering notion of them, which we may and hereafter shall come fully and clearly to understand; so that even Apostles, the secretaries of heaven, might say, *We know in part,* 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

*and we prophesy in part; we now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face**.

In fine, those rules of equity or expedience, which we in our transactions with one another do use, (being derived from our original inclinations to like some good things, or from notions stamped on our soul when God made us according to his image, from common experience, from any kind of rational collection, from the prescription of God's word,) if they be applied to the dealings of God, will be found very incongruous, or deficient; the case being vastly altered, from that infinite distance in nature and state between God and us; and from the immense differences which his relations toward us have from our relations to one another.

Wherefore in divers inquiries about Providence, to which our curiosity will stretch itself, it is impossible for us to be resolved; and launching into them, we shall soon get out of our depth, so as to swim in dissatisfaction, or to sink into distrust: Why God made the world at such an instant, no sooner or later; why he made it thus, not exempt from all disorder; why he framed man (the prince of visible creatures) so fallible and frail, so prone to sin, so

---

1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12.

* So that even Apostles might say, *We know in part, and we prophesy in part;* having no complete revelation of God's mind; *We do now see through a glass darkly;* δι' ἐσόπτρου, through a speculum, that is not directly, but upon reflection, as we see the Sun in a pool, whom we cannot look on in the firmament; ἐν αἰνίγματι, not in distinct expression, but in way of riddle, or mysterious intimation; but *then* (added he, we shall see) *face to face*, that is immediately, directly, clearly; our faculties being improved, and our means of knowing enlarged. MS.

Digitized by Google

liable to misery; why so many things happen offensive to him; why his gifts are distributed with such inequality; such questions we are apt to propound and to debate; but the resolution of them our mind perhaps was not made to apprehend, nor in its most elevate condition shall attain it: however in this state we by no means can come at it; it at least being kept close from us among those things, of which it is said, *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God,* in distinction from others, about which it is added, *but those that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever* *. Deut. xxix. 29.

SERM. XLVIII.

---

* This is that, which God in justification of his dealings with us doth himself sometime declare; *My thoughts,* saith he, *are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Isai. lv. 8, 9.

This Job's friend allegeth to the same purpose: *Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? it is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?* Job. xi. 7, 8;

This made Job himself thus direct his speech to God, *Hast thou eyes of flesh, seest thou as man seeth?* x. 4;

And this made him, after considering the more obvious works of God, to conclude; *Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him?* xxvi. 14.

This made David, upon contemplation of Providence, to exclaim, *O Lord, how great are thy works; and thy thoughts are very deep; Thy fragments are a great deep;* πολλὴ ἄβυσσος, a huge abyss, not to be sounded by our reason: Ps. xcii. 5; xxxvi. 6.

this made Solomon to close all his diligent search and deep meditation upon providential occurrences, with these sayings; *No man can find out the work of the Lord from the beginning to the end.—Though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; though a wise man think to know it, yet he shall not find it out:* this made him to confess, or to bemoan his own disappointment in such researches and studies; *I* Eccles. iii. 11; viii. 17;

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

In such cases the absolute will, the sovereign authority, the pure liberality of God do supply the

---

Eccles. vii. 23. Job xxviii. 12. *said, I will be wise, but it was far from me;* saying this, because the incomprehensibility of Divine wisdom is more especially manifested to those, who by the grace of God have attained greatest measure of knowledge; as St Basil[a] occasionally reflecteth on these words.

Hence although God never acteth without highest reason, it doth in many cases suffice to allege, in lieu of other reasons whereof we may not be capable, the absolute will, the sovereign authority, the pure liberality of God, which may serve, if not to satisfy the minds, yet to stop the mouths of those, who are boldly peremptory, or fondly curious: Rom. ix. 15. Exod. xxxiii. 19. Rom. ix. 20. Issai. xlv. 9. Job xxxviii. 2; xl. 2. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Woe unto him, that striveth with his maker; Who is this, that darkeneth counsels by words without knowledge? Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?* Such words may dash our confidence, if we will be contesting and cavilling about points too high and hard for us: the intent of them is not to imply, that God ever acteth unaccountably, or in a way merely arbitrary; but that sometimes, his rules and reasons of action are not fit subjects of our conception, or discussion; otherwise he doth not wave the verdict of our reason, when the case is such, that we can apprehend it, and the apprehension of it may conduce to beget good affections in us, or good practice. He was not angry with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 25. Jer. xii. 1. when he expostulated—*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* He disallowed not Jeremy to say, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments, wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?* Job xxxviii. 3. He biddeth Job gird up his loins like a man, that is, with his utmost force of reason and intention of mind, to reflect on his doings. He vouchsafeth to argue

[a] Οὐ τῷ φεύγειν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐκείνοις μάλιστα φανεροῦσθαι αὐτῆς τὸ ἀκατάληπτον, οἷς Θεοῦ χάριτι περισσοτέρως προσγέγονεν ἡ γνῶσις. —Opp. Tom. II. p. 354. [Ed. Paris. 1618.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

place of reasons; sufficient, if not to satisfy the minds of men fondly curious, yet to stop the mouths of those who are boldly peremptory: the which are alleged, not with intent to imply, that God ever acteth unaccountably, or without highest reason, but that sometimes his methods of acting are not fit subjects of our conception or discussion; for, otherwhile, God appealeth to the verdict of our reason; when the case is such that we can apprehend it, and the apprehension of it may conduce to good purposes.

Rom. ix. 20. Isai. xlv. 9. Gen. xviii. 25. Ezek. xviii. 25. Isai. v. 3.

2 As the standing rules of God's acting, so the occasional grounds thereof are commonly placed beyond the sphere of our apprehension.

God is obliged to prosecute his own immutable decrees; *Working all things*, as the Apostle saith, *according to the counsel of his own will;* which how can we anywise come to discover? Can we climb up above the heaven of heavens, and there unlock his closet, rifle his cabinet, and peruse the records of everlasting destiny, by which the world is governed? No; *Who knoweth his mind, or hath been his counsellor? Who,* saith the Prophet, *hath stood in the counsel of the Lord; or hath perceived and heard his word?*

Eph. i. 11. Rom. xi. 34. Isai. xl. 13. Jer. xxiii. 18. Wisd. ix. 13.

He doth search the hearts, and try the reins of men; He doth weigh their spirits, and *their works; He doth know their frame, He doth understand their thoughts afar off;* he perceiveth their closest intentions, their deepest contrivances, their most retired behaviours; he consequently is acquainted with

Prov. xvi. 2. Isai. xxvi. 7. 1 Sam. ii. 3. Ps. ciii. 14; cxxxix. 2; lxiv. 6. Job xiv. 6.

---

the case with Jonah. He with much earnestness doth make that appeal, *Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal?* MS.

Jonah iv. 10. Ezek. xviii. 25; xxxiii. 20.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

their true qualifications, capacities, and merits; unto which he most justly and wisely doth accommodate his dealings with them; the which therefore must often thwart the opinions and expectations of us, who are ignorant of those particulars, and can only view the exterior face or semblance of things[b]: for (as Samuel, in the case of preferring David before his brethren, did say) *God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.*

1 Sam. xvi. 7.

God also hath a perfect foresight of contingent events; he seeth upon what pin each wheel moveth, and with what weight every scale will be turned; he discerneth all the connections, all the entanglements of things, and what the result will be upon the combination, or the clashing of numberless causes; in correspondence to which perceptions he doth order things consistently and conveniently; whereas we being stark blind, or very dim-sighted in such respects, (seeing nothing future, and but few things present,) cannot apprehend what is fit and feasible; or why that is done, which appeareth done to us.

Isai. xlv. 11.

God observeth in what relations, and what degrees of comparison, (as to their natures, their virtues, their consequences,) all things do stand, each toward others; so poising them in the balance of right judgment, as exactly to distinguish their just weight and worth: whereas we cannot tell what things to compare, we know not how to put

[b] Ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ μόνα ὁρῶμεν τὰ πράγματα· ὁ δὲ τῶν ὅλων Θεὸς, καὶ τῶν ταῦτα δρώντων ἐπίσταται τὸν σκοπὸν, καὶ τούτῳ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ἔργοις δικάζων ἐκφέρει τὴν ψῆφον.—Theodor. Ep. III. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 899 c.]

Digitized by Google

them into the scale, we are unapt to make due allowances, we are unable to discern which side doth overweigh: in the immense variety of objects our knowledge doth extend to few things eligible, nor among them can we pick out the best competitors for our choice*: hence often must we be at great losses in scanning the designs, or tracing the footsteps of Providence.

3 We are also uncapable thoroughly to discern the ways of Providence from our moral defects, in some measure common to all men; from our stupidity, our sloth, our temerity, our impatience, our impurity of heart, our perverseness of will and affections: we have not the perspicacity to espy the subtile tracks and secret reserves of divine wisdom; we have not the industry, with steady application of mind, to regard and meditate on God's works; we have not the temper and patience to wait upon God, until he discover himself in the accomplishment of his purposes; we have not that blessed purity of heart, which is requisite to the seeing God in his special dispensations; we have not that rectitude of will and government of our passions, as not to be scandalized at what God doeth, if it thwarteth our conceit or humour: such defects are observable in the best men; who therefore have

Matt. v. 8.

* We value (according to our carnal prejudices) things at a high rate, which God doth little regard. Every temporal convenience or pleasure is in high estimation with us, but with God of no account: *That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination before God.* God no more regards us, when we complain of a petty want or cross, than a wise parent doth mind his child, wailing for a trifle he lacketh, or feeleth. MS.

Luke xvi. 15.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

misapprehended, have disrelished, have fretted and murmured at the proceedings of God*: we might instance in Job, in David, in Elias, in Jonah, in the holy Apostles themselves, by whose speeches and deportments in some cases it may appear how

---

* David was a good man, yet he was so dull, as not to apprehend why God should endure the wicked to prosper for some time; *So foolish* (said he of himself) *was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee;* he was so lazy as not to hold out in studying the point; for, *When* (said he) *I thought to know* this, *it was too painful for me;* he otherwise was so impatient, as from present crosses happening to him to conclude himself deserted by God, *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes;* and oftentime we thence find him expostulating with God as forgetful or unmindful of him; *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*

Ps. lxxiii. 3, 22; lxxiii. 16. xxxi. 22. xiii. 1.

Job is the mirror of incomparable temper and patience; yet, *Did he,* in contesting his case, *darken counsel by words void of knowledge;* so God charged him; *He did* (as the divine Elihu said) *speak without knowledge, he opened his mouth in vain, and his words were without wisdom; He did multiply words against God, justifying himself rather than God; He did utter things too wonderful for him, which he knew not;* as himself, upon God's increpation and instruction, did in the end confess.

Job xxxviii. 2; xxxv. 2; xxxiv. 5; xl. 2, 8; xlii. 3; xxxiv. 35, 37; xxxv. 16; xxxii. 2. xlii. 3.

Jonas was a man of great piety and integrity; yet when God did shew an act of mercy crossing his expectation and humour, he was, (it is said) exceedingly displeased; when God blasted a gourd, bereaving him of a sorry comfort or accommodation, he thought he did well to be angry.

Jonah iv. 1, 7, 9.

Elias was a man of admirable wisdom, no less than zeal and courage; yet was he discouraged at the posture of things, and in despair grew weary of his life.

1 Kings xix. 4, 10.

Even the great friend of God, and renowned pattern of faith, did sometime in his heart laugh at the promise made to him of a son to be given him in his decrepit old age.

Digitized by Google

difficult it is for us, who have *Eyes of flesh*, as Job speaketh, and hearts too never quite freed of carnality, to see through, or fully to acquiesce in the dealings of God. SERM. XLVIII. Job x. 4.

It is, indeed, a distemper incident to us, which we can hardly shun or cure, that we are apt to measure the equity and expedience of things according to our opinions and passions; affecting consequently to impose on God our silly imaginations, as rules of his proceeding, and to constitute him the executioner of our sorry passions: what we conceit fit to be done, that we take God bound to perform; when we feel ourselves stirred, then we presume God must be alike concerned: to our apprehensions every slight inconvenience is a huge calamity, every scratch of fortune is a ghastly wound; God therefore, we think, should have prevented it, or must presently remove it; every pitiful bauble, every trivial accommodation is a matter of high consequence, which if God withhold, we are ready to clamour on him, and wail as children for want of a trifle. Are we soundly angry, or inflamed with zeal? then fire must come down from heaven, then thunderbolts must fly about, then nothing but sudden woe and vengeance are denounced. Are we pleased? then showers of Luke ix. 54.

The Apostles were excellent persons, who had the goodness to forsake all and follow our Lord; yet when our Lord discoursed to them of his passion, *They did* ('tis said) *understand none of those things*; when the event accordingly did fall out, they were all offended in him. Matt. xix. 27. Luke xviii. 34. Matt. xxvi. 31.

So hard is it for us, who, as Job saith, have *Eyes of flesh*, and hearts too never quite free of carnality, to see through, or fully to be satisfied in the dealings of God. MS. Job x. 4.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

blessings must descend on the heads, then floods of wealth must run into the laps of our favourites; otherwise we are not satisfied, and scarce can deem God awake, or mindful of his charge. We do beyond measure hate or despise some persons, and to those God must not afford any favour, any mercy, any forbearance, or time of repentance; we excessively admire or dote on others, and those God must not touch or cross; if he doth not proceed thus, he is in danger to forfeit his authority: he must hardly be allowed to govern the world, in case he will not square his administrations to our fond conceit or froward humour: hence no wonder that men often are stumbled about Providence; for God will not rule according to their fancy or pleasure, (it would be a mad world if he should,) neither, indeed, could he do so if he would, their judgments and their desires being infinitely various, inconsistent, and repugnant. Again,

4 The nature of those instruments which divine Providence doth use in administration of human affairs, hindereth us from discerning it: it is an observation among philosophers, that the footsteps of divine wisdom are, to exclusion of doubt, far more conspicuous in the works of nature, than in the management of our affairs[c]; so that some who

[c] Nam cum dispositi quæsissem fœdera mundi,
Præscriptosque mari fines ———
——————— tunc omnia rebar
Consilio firmata Dei ———
Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi
Adspicerem ———————
——— rursus labefacta cadebat
Religio, &c. Claud. in Ruff. I. [4—15.]

Diod. Sic. Lib. XV. p. 482. [Ed. Steph. 1559.] [Περὶ δὲ τῶν συμπτωμάτων μεγάλης οὔσης ζητήσεως, οἱ μὲν φυσικοὶ πειρῶνται τὰς αἰτίας τῶν τοιούτων παθῶν οὐκ εἰς τὸ θεῖον ἀναφέρειν, ἀλλ' εἰς φυσικὰς

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

by contemplation of natural appearances were convinced of God's existence, and his protection of the world, (who thence could not doubt but that an immense wisdom had erected the beautiful frame of heaven and earth, had ranged the stars in their order and courses, had formed the bodies and souls of animals, had provided for the subsistence and propagation of each species, had settled and doth uphold the visible world in its so comely and convenient state, that even such men,) reflecting on the course of human transactions, have staggered into distrust, whether a divine wisdom doth sit at the helm of our affairs; many thence hardly would admit God to be concerned in them, but supposed him to commit their conduct to a fatal swing, or a casual fluctuation of obvious causes: one great reason of this difference may be, that whereas the instruments of divine power in nature are in themselves merely passive, or act only as they are acted by pure necessity, (as a pen in writing, or a hammer in striking,) being thence determinate, uniform, constant, and certain in their operation; whenever there any footsteps of counsel, any tendency to an end, and deviation from the common tracks of motion do appear, such effects cannot reasonably be imputed merely to natural causes, but to a superior wisdom, wielding them in such a manner, and steering them to such a mark: but the visible engines of Providence in our affairs are self-moving agents, working with knowledge and choice; the which, as in themselves they are

τινας καὶ κατηναγκασμένας περιστάσεις· οἱ δ' εὐσεβῶς διακείμενοι πρὸς τὸ θεῖον, πιθανάς τινας αἰτίας ἀποδιδοῦσι τοῦ συμβάντος, ὡς διὰ θεῶν μῆνιν γεγενημένης τῆς συμφορᾶς τοῖς εἰς τὸ θεῖον ἀσεβήσασι.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

indeterminate, irregular, and uncertain; so they are capable to be diversified in numberless unaccountable ways, according to various representations of objects, or by influence of divers principles inclining to judge and choose differently: temper, humour, passion, prejudice, custom, example, together with contingencies of occasion, (depending on like principles in adjacent free causes,) do move, singly or combinedly, in ways so implicate, to the production of so various events, that nothing hardly can fall out, which may not with some plausible colour of reason be derived from some one of those sources, or from a complication of them: nothing can appear so uncouth or extravagant, which may not be fathered on some fetch of wit, or some hit of fancy, or some capricio of humour, or some transport of passion, or some lucky advantage, or on divers of those conspiring; whence in accounting for the reason of such events, men deem they may leave out Providence as superfluous; especially considering, that usually disorders and defects, only imputable to man's will, do accompany and further such events.

Gen. xlv. 5; l. 20. Ps. cv. 17. 2 Sam. xvi. 10; xxiv. 1. 1 Kings xii. 15, 24. Job i. 15, &c. Acts ii. 23; iv. 28.

For instance, what other cause would many think needful to assign for the conveyance of Joseph into Egypt, than the envy of his brethren; for Shimei's reviling David, than his base malignity; for David's numbering the people, than his wanton pride; for Jeroboam's revolt, than his unruly ambition; for Job's being robbed, than the thievish disposition of the Arabs; for his being diseased, than a redundance of bad humours; for our Lord's suffering, than the spiteful rage of the Jewish rulers and people; together with the treach-

Digitized by Google

erous avarice of Judas, and the corrupt easiness of Pilate? These events all of them are ascribed to God's hand and special ordination; but men could not see or avow it in them: what need, will men ever say, in such cases to introduce God's aid, when human means suffice to achieve the feat? SERM. XLVIII.

5 Indeed, as in nature the influences of heaven, and of inferior causes, so commonly in the production of these events, divine and human agency are so knit and twisted one with the other, that it is not easy to discriminate them, so as to sever the bounds of common and special Providence; or to discern what God performeth by natural instruments, what by superior efficacy; when the balance turneth from our inclinations, when it is cast from a grain thrown in by divine interposition; the management of these affairs being a concert, wherein God's wisdom beareth one part, man's free-will playeth another[d]; fortune and occasion also do strike in; we, not seeing the first, are prone to ascribe all the harmony to the last, which are most obvious and visible.

6 The more apt we are to do thus, because the manner of divine efficacy is ever very soft and gentle: God disposeth things *fortiter et suaviter*[e]; so as effectually to perform what he designeth, but in the most sweet and easy way: his Providence doth not hurry along like an impetuous rumbling torrent, but glideth on as a smooth and still current, with an irresistible but imperceptible force carrying

[d] Θεὸς μὲν πάντα, καὶ μετὰ Θεὸν τύχη, καὶ καιρὸς, τὰ ἀνθρώπινα κυβερνῶσι τὰ ξύμπαντα.—Max. Tyr. Diss. III. e Plat. [Diss. XIX. p. 229. Ed. Davis.]

[e] Εὐρώστως καὶ χρηστῶς.—Wisd. viii. 1.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

things down therewith: without much ado, without any clatter, by a nod of his head, by a whisper of his mouth, by a turn of his hand, he doth effect his purposes: winding up a close spring, he setteth the greatest wheels in motion; and thrusting in an insensible spoke, he stoppeth the greatest wheels in their career; injecting a thought[f], exciting an humour, presenting an occasion, insinuating a petty accident, he bringeth about the most notable events. He doth so fashion the hearts of men, so manage their hands, so guide their steps, that even they who are acted by him cannot feel the least touch upon them. For, *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; he turneth it wheresoever he will;* that is, by secret pipes, by obscure channels, God conveyeth the minds and wills of greatest persons (the chief engines of his Providence) unto such points of resolution as he pleaseth, so that they seem to flow thither of their own accord, without any exterior direction or impulse: hence do his most effectual operations slip by us without making impression on our minds, which are wont to apprehend things, as with a gross palpability they do incur the senses, so that the Preacher, comparing the methods of Providence with the most occult proceedings in nature, might well say, *As thou knowest not the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.* Again,

Ps. xxxiii. 15.
Isai. xli. 13; xlii. 6.
Prov. xvi. 9; xx. 24.
Jer. x. 23.
Job xxxiii. 14; xxiii. 8.
Prov. xxi. 1.
Eccles. xi. 5.

7 God, in his progress toward the achievement of any design, is not wont to go in the most direct

[f] Θεοῦ τινος (ὡς ἔοικεν) εἰς νοῦν ἐμβαλόντος τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ.—Plut. Timol. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 174. Ed. Reisk.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

and compendious ways, but commonly windeth about, and taketh a large compass, enfolding several other co-incident purposes, some whereof may be no less considerable, than is that, which we deem most necessary, and affect to see dispatched: but this course seemeth tedious to us, who have not the wit to perceive that complexion of ends, nor the temper to wait for the completion of them. If God, when we seem to need, doth not instantly appear in our favour and succour; if he doth not presently vindicate truth and right; if he doth not nip wicked designs in the bud, and repress the first onsets of outrageous violence; if for a while he suffereth *The tabernacles of robbers to prosper*, and *Iniquity to lift up its horn;* then he is in a slumber, quite unmindful or insensible of us; then he turneth aside his face, or doth behold what passeth as an unconcerned spectator; then he standeth aloof, unready to help us; then doth he hold off his hand, not meddling in our affairs: in such cases we are apt to cry out, *Estis ubi O Superi*[s]*? How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget; how long wilt thou hide thy face? Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? why standest thou afar off? why withdrawest thou thy hand? pluck it out of thy bosom: Return, O Lord, how long?* Such are our prayers, such our expostulations; so is our blind impatience prone to muse and mutter; not considering how many good designs God is carrying on in a calm and steady pace, by well measured steps, all which, in due season, when they are ripe for accomplishment, shall undoubtedly be effected; for, *The Lord*, as St Peter saith, *is*

Job xii. 6. Ps. lxxv. 4.

Ps. xiii. 1; lxxxix. 46; xc. 13; lxxiv. 10; xliv. 23, 24; lv. 1; xciv. 3; xxxv. 17; xliv. 23; xxxv. 23; vii. 6; lxxiv. 11; x. 1; xc. 13; vi. 4; vii. 6, 7; lxxx. 14; xxii. 1; ix. 19; xxxviii. 2; lxxi. 12. Vid. Hab. i. 2.

[s] Sil. Ital. [VI. 87.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

2 Pet. iii. 9, 10. Jer. xxiii. 20.

Isai. xxx. 18.

2 Pet. iii. 8.

not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward all men; that is, he certainly will express his faithful benignity toward good men, yet so as also to extend his merciful patience toward others; he so will tender the interests of some, as concurrently to procure the welfare of all, and accordingly will time his proceedings, allowing the leisure and opportunities requisite thereto: he can, although we cannot, wait to be gracious; for as in him there are no passions to precipitate action, so to him there are no sensible differences of time, *One day being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

8 Again, God (as is the property of every wise agent) is wont to act variously, according to the state and circumstances of things, or to the dispositions and capacities of persons; so as to do the same thing for different ends, and different things for the same end; to apply one instrument to several uses, and by several instruments to work out one purpose: so he afflicteth good men out of love, for trial and improvement of their virtues; bad men in displeasure, to illustrate his power and justice on them; he encourageth and blesseth the one, he punisheth and curseth the other with prosperity; he reclaimeth both from error and sin by either of those methods, as their temper and their circumstances do require. Whence it is very difficult for us ever from the kind of accidents befalling men, to divine how far God is concerned in them, or to what particular scope they are aimed; so that well might the Preacher, upon a careful observation of such occurrences, establish

Digitized by Google

this rule, *No man knoweth love or hatred* (that is, the special regard of God toward men) *by all that is before them;* because, *all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* Further, SERM. XLVIII. Eccles. ix. 1, 2.

9 There are different ends which Providence in various order and measure doth pursue, which we, by reason of our dim insight and short prospect, cannot descry: God, as the universal and perpetual Governor of the world, in his dispensation of things, respecteth not only the good of this or that person, of one nation or one age; but often in some degree waving that, or taking care for it in a less remarkable way, hath a provident regard to the more extensive good of a whole people, of the world, of posterity; as he did order his friend Abraham to wander in a strange land for the benefit of his seed; Joseph to be sold, calumniated, and fettered for the preservation of his family; our Lord to suffer those grievous things for the redemption of mankind; the Jews to be rejected for the salvation of the Gentiles: in such cases purblind men, observing events to cross particular and present ends, but not being aware how conducible they may prove to general, remote, and more important designs, can hardly be satisfied how God should be concerned in them; the present, or that which lieth adjacent just under our nose, is all that we can or will consider, and therefore must be ill judges of what is done by all-provident wisdom. Hab. iii. 6.

10 Again, God permitteth things, bad in their own nature, with regard to their instrumental use and tendency; for that often the worst things may be ordinable to the best ends; things very bitter

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

may work pleasant effects; upon the wildest stock divine husbandry can ingraft most excellent fruit*; sin really, and suffering reputedly, are the worst evils, yet from them much glory to God and great benefit to men do accrue; even from the most wicked act that ever was committed, from the most lamentable event that ever did happen, fruits admirably glorious and immensely beneficial did spring; yet usually so blind are we as to be offended at such things, and from them to raise exceptions against Providence.

11 Also the expediency of things to be permitted or crossed doth frequently consist, not in themselves singly taken, as particular acts or events, but in their conjunction, or reference to others, with which they may become subservient toward a common end; so that divers things in themselves extremely bad may by combination or collision engender good effects; and thence prove fit weapons or tools of Providence; as the most deadly poisons may be so mixed, that curbing one another's force, they may constitute a harmless mass, sometimes a wholesome medicine: but we

* As by disorderly fermentation liquors are clarified, as by shaking things are settled in a firmer state, as by hard rubbing the rust is worn off, and by blustering winds the air is cleansed; so by violent, irregular, and calamitous events the public state of things is often mended; by cruel wars, as by letting of blood, the commonwealth is freed of bad humours; by the rise of heresies truth is more discussed and illustrated; by persecution Religion is quickened and propagated; by any kind of suffering men become wiser and better; any evil, any mischief is improvable to good use, seeing from the most wicked act, and the most lamentable event that ever was, &c. MS.

Digitized by Google

poring on the simple ingredients, and not considering how they may be tempered, or how applied by a skilful hand, can hardly deem the toleration of them congruous to wisdom. Further, SERM. XLVIII.

12 That Providence sometimes is obscure and intricate, may be attributed to the will of God, upon divers good accounts designing it to be such: *Verily,* saith the Prophet, *thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.* Isai. xlv. 15. Ps. lxxxix. 46.

God commonly doth not intend to exert his hand notoriously; for that whereas every special interposition of his hand is in effect a miracle, (surmounting the natural power, or thwarting the ordinary course of inferior causes,) it doth not become him to prostitute his miraculous power, or to exert it otherwise than upon singular occasions, and for most weighty causes: it is not conformable to the tenor of his administrations to convince men against their will, or by irresistible evidence to wring persuasion from stubborn or stupid minds; but to exercise the wisdom, and to prove the ingenuity of well disposed persons, who upon competent intimations shall be capable to spell out, and forward to approve his proceedings.

13 He will not glare forth in discoveries so bright as to dazzle, to confound our weak sight; therefore he veileth his face with a cloud, and wrappeth his power in some obscurity; therefore, *Clouds and darkness are round about him: He maketh darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him is dark waters and thick clouds of the sky.* Hab. iii. 4. Ps. xcvii. 2; xviii. 11.

14 He meaneth thereby to improve and exalt our faith, being the less seen, that he may be the

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

more believed; faith never rising higher than when it doth soar to objects beyond our sight; when we can approve God's wisdom and justice in occurrences surmounting our conceit; when we can rely upon God's word and help, although the stream of his proccedings seemeth to cross our hopes.

15 It is fit also, that God many times designedly should act in ways surpassing our apprehension, and apt to baffle or puzzle our reason, that he may appear God indeed, infinitely transcending us in perfection of wisdom and justice; or that we, comprehending the reason of his actings, may not imagine our wisdom comparable, our justice commensurate to his; yea, that we in those respects do exceed him; for, *That*, as Tertullian discourseth, *which may be seen, is less than the eyes that survey it; that which may be comprehended, is less than the hands that grasp it; that which may be valued, is less than the senses which rate it*[h]. It is God's being inestimable that makes him worthily esteemed[i]; his being incomprehensible rendereth him adorable.

16 The obscurity of Providence doth, indeed, conciliate an awful reverence toward it; for darkness naturally raiseth a dread of invisible powers; we use to go on tremblingly, when we cannot see far about us; we regard none so much as those, whose wisdom we find to overreach ours, and whose intentions we cannot sound: it was Elihu's observation, *With God is terrible majesty; the*

Job xxxvii. 22, 23, 24.

[h] Quod videri communiter, quod comprehendi, quod æstimari potest, minus est et oculis quibus occupatur, et manibus quibus contaminatur, et sensibus quibus invenitur.—Tertul. Apol. cap. XVII. [Opp. p. 16 D.]

[i] Hoc est quod Deum æstimari facit, dum æstimari non capit. —d. ibid.

Digitized by Google

Almighty, we cannot find him out;—men do therefore fear him. SERM. XLVIII.

17 It is also requisite, that God should dispose many occurrences, cross to our vulgar notions, and offensive to our carnal sense, that we may thence be prompted to think of God, driven to seek him, engaged to mark him interposing in our affairs: men from disorderly and surprising accidents preposterously do conceive doubts about Providence, as if, it managing things, nothing odd or amiss would occur; whereas if no such events did start up, they might be proner to question it, they would at least come to forget or neglect it; for if human transactions passed on as do the motions of nature, in a smooth course, without any rub or disturbance, men commonly would no more think of God than they do when they behold the sun rising, the rivers running, the sea flowing; they would not depend on his protection, or have recourse to him for succour: it is difficulty and distress seizing on them which compel men to implore God for relief, which dispose them to see his hand reaching it forth unto them; according to that in the Psalm; *When he slew them, then they sought him: they returned and inquired early after God: they remembered that God was their rock, and the most high God their Redeemer.* Again, Ps. lxxviii. 34, 35.

18 It is needful that the present course of Providence should not be transparently clear and satisfactory, that we may be well assured concerning a future account, and forced in our thoughts to recur thither for a resolution of all such emergent doubts and difficulties: for if all accounts were apparently stated and discharged here; if now right

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

did ever prevail, and iniquity were suppressed; if virtue were duly crowned, and vice deservedly scourged, who would hope or fear an after-reckoning?

This, indeed, is the grand cause why Providence now doth appear so cloudy, that men consider not how our affairs have no complete determination, or final issue here; things now are doing, and not done; in a progress and tendency toward somewhat beyond, not in a state of consistence and perfection; this not being the place of deciding causes or dispensing rewards; but a state of probation, of work, of travail, of combat, of running for the prize, of sowing toward the harvest; a state of liberty to follow our own choice, and to lay the ground of our doom; of falling into sin, and of rising thence by repentance; of God's exercising patience, and exhibiting mercy: wherefore as we cannot well judge of an artificial work by its first draughts, or of a poem by a few scenes, but must stay till all be finished or acted through[k]; so we cannot here clearly discern the entire congruity of providential dispensations to the divine attributes; the catastrophe or utmost resolution of things is the General Judgment, wherein the deep wisdom,

Rom. ii. 7.

the exact justice, the perfect goodness of God will be displayed to the full satisfaction or conviction of all men; when God's honour will be thoroughly vindicated, his despised patience and his abused grace will be avenged; every case will be rightly tried, every work will be justly recompensed, all accounts will be set straight; in the mean time divers things must occur unaccountable to us, looking upon things as they now stand absolutely before

[k] Vid. Chrys. Opp. Tom. VII. p. 15.

Digitized by Google

us, without reference to that day: considering this may induce us to suspend our opinion about such matters, allowing God to go through with his work before we censure it, not being so quick and precipitate as to forestall his judgment: and surely, would we but observe that reasonable advice of St Paul, *Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come,* our chief doubts would be resolved, our shrewdest exceptions against Providence would be voided*. SERM. XLVIII. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

* In fine, whereas there can hardly be general rules framed for distinguishing the by-ways of special Providence from the great roads of common Providence, termed nature and fortune, which will not admit cases and exceptions; which exceptions men commonly are not perspicacious or skilful enough to observe, or to apply seasonably; and often by ill prejudices and affections are indisposed to do it; therefore, frequently they cannot discern the ways of Providence, or pass right judgment upon them.

Such are the reasons and causes, wherefore the Providence of God is so inscrutable, and untraceable to us, drawn from the nature of God's instruments and the manner of his working, the impotency of our faculties, the meanness of our state, the defect of our wills, the nature of God, his will and purposes, with the expediency of things, and the like sources.

I shall only add by way of corollary, that hence we may find a satisfactory resolution of the main enquiries about Providence, which have perplexed men, and raised in them offence against it; for although of the divine proceedings in them questioned, we may render some fair and plausible account; and so to endeavour the vindication of them may be commendable; yet in the end, it is most safe to shroud ourselves under this impregnable defence; and after St Paul to silence both our adversaries and ourselves with an, *ὦ βάθος, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.* Rom. xi. 33.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

These are the chief reasons of the point which meditation did suggest; upon it (for it is not a

---

For instance: it hath been one great offence, that there is in nature such a thing as sin, heinous and outrageous sin, working so much disorder and havoc in the world, breeding so great mischief and pain to mankind; if (argued Cotta in Cicero) there were Providence, it would have given to men such a reason, as would have excluded vices and faults; it would not have given any reason to those, who it did know would use it perversely or naughtily[1]; to which point we may answer, that the objectors did not well consider, how necessary sin is, or how convenient and useful to the best purposes. It is, (we may say) as fit there should be sin, as that there should be man; a creature endued with degrees of reason and freedom, conformed with sense and appetite; exempted from fate and fortune; capable of praise and reward, subject to rule and law; as that there should be virtue, consisting in a rational assent, and voluntary conformity to the dictates of reason and precepts of God; as that there should be an intercourse of government. and judgment between God and man.

It was needful for the due illustration of all God's holy attributes; that is, for the principal end why things should be created or subsist; for if there were no grievous offences committed, how could it appear how holy God is in detesting them, how just in promoting them, how patient in bearing them, how merciful in pardoning them, how powerful in restraining them, and reclaiming from them, how wise in ordering them to good ends?

It was requisite to be, that it might exercise our faculties in knowing it, in loathing and slighting it, in declining and shunning it as a most dangerous rock; that as a foil it might set off the beauty and lustre of goodness; that by observing its ugly nature and sad consequences we might understand more clearly, more heartily love, more readily and willingly embrace virtue.

[1] Cic. de Nat. Deor. III. 31.

Digitized by Google

point merely speculative, but pregnant with useful consequences) divers practical applications may be SERM. XLVIII.

It was needful there should be sin, that there might be suffering, which is a necessary means of producing wisdom and virtue; that is, of improving and advancing human nature.

It was in fine needful that it should be, that there might be such a world as this, a theatre of various accidents, serving to entertain wise spectators with wholesome instruction and delight; in the which sin beareth a great part, and ministereth chief occasion to them. For such purposes and the like it was (as our Saviour saith) necessary that scandals should be. Matt. xviii. 7. Luke xvii. 1. 1 Cor. xi. 19.

Such considerations we may allege to appease dissatisfaction; but to suppress it, we must add, that God knoweth better reasons for it, locked up in the closets of his unsearchable wisdom.

Again, it is very offensive to the sense of men, and raiseth their stomach against Providence, that bad men (very cruel oppressors, very unjust, luxurious, and impious persons) are suffered to live, to prosper, and to thrive; whereas innocent, virtuous, and pious men commonly do undergo grievous affliction and trouble. To those who are thus scandalized, we might say much in favour and defence of these dispensations, declaring how needful and convenient they are; for

If bad men were presently dealt with according to their deserts, there would no bad man subsist, it being, as the Prophet saith, of the Lord's mercy, that they are not consumed; and consequently so proper objects of divine clemency, severity, and power, so useful instruments of his Providence would be wanting; the like would happen, if they were continually thwarted and vexed; for then divine mercy could not be so declared in bearing them, in indulging benefits to them, in reclaiming them, in waiting for their conversion; then could not divine justice be so displayed in curbing their Lam. iii. 22.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

grounded, which the time scarcely will allow me to name.

---

outrage, in repressing their insolence, in chastising their incorrigible wickedness.

We might say, that there is no incongruity to endure wicked men, while they are corrigible, while they are tolerable, while they are serviceable; and that in effect they no further are endured.

That there are such punishments naturally, and in the usual course of Providence, annexed to wickedness, which may hinder their state, in just esteem, ever to be accounted prosperous[m].

That impunity itself is a grievous punishment to them, whereby they accumulate guilt, and treasure up wrath to themselves, to be executed in due time, after the season of trial and patience.

And as to the afflictions of good men, we might answer that, if good men were not afflicted, there would scarce be any good men, the chief virtues would be wanting, sufferings being necessary instruments of rendering men good, and occasions of expressing goodness: there would be no patience without crosses to be endured, no contentedness without wants to be felt, no fortitude without hazards to be encountered, no industry without pains to be taken, no humility without infirmities to be reflected on, no charity without needs to be relieved, and injuries to be forgiven; no devotion without a sense of wants to kindle desire; no prudence without experience of various fortunes, bad as well as good; no great instances of obedience, or clear testimonies of faith in God, or love and reverence to him, without troubles and persecutions to be willingly undertaken, or contentedly undergone for God's sake. Neither could there be any so considerable ground, or title to reward; take away their combats; and their praises cease, their crowns do fade away. Nor could divine Providence be exercised and glorified in the support, relief, and comfort of good men, were

[m] Οὐδὲν ἀζήμιόν ἐστι ποιοῦντα ἄδικα.—Epict. Diss. III. 26.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

1 It should render us modest and sober in our judgment about providential occurrences, not pretending thoroughly to know the reasons of God's proceedings, or to define the consequences of them; for it is plainly fond arrogance, or profane imposture, to assume perfect skill in that which passeth our capacity to learn. Ecclus. iii. 21. Ps. cxxxi. 1.

2 It should make us staunch and cautious of grounding judgment or censure upon present events about any cause, or any person; for it is notorious temerity to pass sentence upon grounds uncapable of evidence. Luke xiii. 1.

3 It should repress wanton curiosity, which may transport us beyond our bounds in speculation of these mysterious intrigues; so that we shall lose our labour and time, shall discompose our minds, shall plunge ourselves into vain errors or anxious doubts. Job xi. 12. Wisd. ix. 13. Job xlii. 3.

4 It should keep us from conceitedness and confidence in our own wisdom; for how can we Job xl. 4; xlii. 2. Ps. lxxiii. 22; xxxix. 9.

---

they exempted from suffering; the which is therefore never very sad, because attended with those alleviations.

Such accounts we may render, proper enough to justify God's proceedings, yet not sufficient to quell all cavillations; without recourse to God's transcendent wisdom.

Another grand exception against Providence is, that God should suffer so many nations to continue in barbarous ignorance, and consequently in brutish practice of vice, withholding those means of light and grace, which are needful to convert them; of this we might also assign divers reasons; we might propound considerations, in some measure apt to clear the justice and wisdom of God in that dispensation; but so that the last resort must be to this σοφὸν φάρμακον, we must rest firm upon this holy anchor of God's inscrutable wisdom. MS.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLVIII.

conceit highly of that, or much confide in it, which we find so unable to penetrate the reason of most common and obvious appearances; so *non-plust* in its inquiries, so defeated in its expectations, so mistaken in its judgments of things?

5 It should preserve us from infidelity, and from despair upon account of any cross accidents occurring here; for it is unreasonable to disbelieve a notion, otherwise well grounded, because we cannot assoil scruples or cavils drawn from matters inscrutable to us; it is foolish to despair of a good event upon appearances, whereof we cannot apprehend the full reason or final result.

2 Kings xx. 9. Matt. xvi. 23.

6 It should prevent our taking offence, or being discontented at any events rising up before us; for to be displeased at that, which a superior wisdom, unsearchable to us, doth order, is to be displeased at we know not what, or why, which is childish weakness; to fret and wail at that, which, for all we can see, proceedeth from good intention, and tendeth to good issue, is pitiful frowardness.

Eccles. viii. 11.

7 It should guard us from security, or from presuming upon impunity for our miscarriages; for seeing God doth not always clearly and fully discover his mind, it is vain from God's reservedness to conclude his unconcernedness; or because he is now patient, that he never will be just in chastising our offences.

Isai. xxvi. 11; v. 12.

8 It should quicken our industry in observing and considering the works of Providence; for since they are not easily discernible, and the discerning them in some measure is sometimes of great use, it is needful that we be very diligent in contemplation of them; the fainter our light is, the more attent

Digitized by Google

we should be in looking; the knottier the subject, the more earnest should be our study on it.

9 It should oblige us to be circumspect and wary in our conversation; for the darker the way is, the more careful should be our walking therein, lest we err, lest we stumble, lest we strike on somewhat hurtful to us.

10 It should engage us constantly to seek God, and to depend on him, for the protection and conduct of his grace, which is the only clue that can lead us safely through this intricate labyrinth of worldly contingencies. Jer. x. 23.

11 In fine, it should cause us humbly to admire and adore that wisdom, which governeth the world in ways no less great and wonderful, than just and holy: for, *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints.* Ps. xxxvi. 6; xcii. 5. Rev. xv. 3; xix. 2.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Tim. i. 17.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLIX.

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM CXLV. 9.

The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

SERM. XLIX.

THE goodness of God is a frequented theme; to many perhaps it may seem vulgar and trite; so that discourse thereon, like a story often told, may be nauseous to their ears: but in truth neither can we speak too much upon this most excellent subject, nor ought we ever to be weary in hearing about it; for it is a sign that the palate of our mind is distempered, if we do not with delight and affection relish any mention of divine goodness. Yea, the observation of men's common practice would induce us to think, that either this point is not so well known, or but little believed, or at least not well considered and applied. For how could we be so void of love to God, of gratitude toward him, of faith and hope in him, were we thoroughly persuaded, did we seriously consider, that he is so exceedingly good toward us? How can we be so insensible of the benefits we enjoy, so distrustful of finding succours and supplies in our need, so dissatisfied and discontented with what befalls us, if we conceive and weigh, that all things do proceed

Digitized by Google

from, are guided and governed by immense goodness? How also, if men have such an opinion of God impressed on their minds, comes it to pass, that they are so little careful to resemble and imitate him in kindness, bounty, and mercy to one another? How is it, in fine, that the most powerful argument to all manner of good practice, and the mightiest aggravation of sin, if well known and pondered, hath so little force and efficacy upon us? From experience therefore this argument may seem scarce sufficiently inculcated. We may add, that discourse upon this attribute (which above all other attributes doth render God peculiarly admirable and amiable[a]) hath this special advantage beyond other discourses, that it doth, if our hearts conspire therewith, approach most nearly to the formal exercise of the most high and heavenly parts of devotion, praise and thanksgiving; that it more immediately conduces to the breeding, the nourishing, the augmenting in us the best and noblest of pious affections, love and reverence to God; trust and hope in him; willing resolutions to please and serve him; whence it is consequent, that we cannot too much employ our thoughts, our words, or our attention upon this point. Besides so much reason, we have also good example to countenance us in so doing: we have the precedent of the holy Psalmist resolving to make it his constant and continual employment: *I will sing*, saith he, *of the mercies of the Lord; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.* And,

Ps. lxxxix. 1.

[a] Θεός· οὐ πολλῶν ὄντων, ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν οὕτως, ὡς τὸ πάντας εὐεργέτειν, ἰδιωτατόν.—Greg. Nas. [Orat. XXXII. Opp. Tom. I. p. 596 E.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever; (that blessing and praising God, the context shews to have consisted especially in the declaration of God's great goodness:) and, *It is a good thing,* saith he again, *to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most High: to shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* Such were his intentions, and such his judgment about this practice; and we find him in effect true and answerable to them; every song of his, every meditation, every exercise of devotion chiefly harping upon this string; and he earnestly wishes that others would consent and consort with him therein; he earnestly exhorts and excites them thereto; *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Praise the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.* That one example might sufficiently authorize this practice; but we have innumerable others, and those the highest that can be, to encourage and engage us thereto; even the whole choir of heaven, whose perpetual business and happy entertainment it is to contemplate with their minds, to celebrate with their voices, the immense goodness of God; *They have,* as it is in the Revelation, *no rest day or night,* from performing this office. Such is the subject of our discourse; the which our text most plainly and fully expresses; asserting not only the goodness of God, but the universal and boundless extent thereof; *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies* (or *his bowels of affection and pity*) *are over all his works.* And that God, indeed, is

Ps. cxlv. 2;

xcii. 1, 2.

cvii. 8; cvi. 1.

Rev. iv. 8.

Digitized by Google

such, we shall first endeavour to declare, then shall briefly apply the consideration thereof to practice.

That God the Lord, and Maker of all things, is of himself, in regard to all his creatures, especially to us men, superlatively good, that is, disposed never without just or necessary cause to harm us, and inclinable to do us all possible and befitting good, the universal frame of Nature and the constant course of Providence do afford us sufficient reason to conceive, and most frequent, most express testimonies of Holy Scripture do more fully demonstrate. There is no argument from natural effects discernible by us, which proveth God's existence, (and innumerable such there are, every sort of things well studied may afford some,) the which doth not together persuade God to be very kind and benign; careful to impart to us all befitting good, suitable to our natural capacity and condition; and unwilling that any considerable harm, any extreme want or pain should befall us. (I interpose such limitations, for that an absolute, or universal and perpetual exemption from all kinds or all degrees of inconvenience, an accumulation of all sorts of appearing good upon us, doth not become or suit our natural state of being, or our rank in perfection among creatures; neither, all things being duly stated and computed, will it turn to best account for us.) The best (no less convincing than obvious) arguments, asserting the existence of a Deity, are deduced from the manifold and manifest footsteps of admirable wisdom, skill, and design apparent in the general order, and in the particular frame of creatures; the beautiful harmony of the whole, and the artificial contrivance of

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

each part of the world; the which it is hardly possible that any unprejudiced and undistempered mind should conceive to proceed from blind chance, or as blind necessity. But with this wisdom are always complicated no less evident marks of goodness. We cannot in all that vast bulk of the creation, and numberless variety of things, discover any piece of mere pomp, or dry curiosity; every thing seems to have some beneficial tendency; according to which it confers somewhat to the need, convenience, or comfort of those principal creatures, which are endued with sense and capacity to enjoy them. Most of them have a palpable relation to the benefit (to the subsistence or delight) of living creatures; and especially, in an ultimate relation, to the benefit of man; and the rest, although their immediate use be not to our dim sight so discernible, may therefore be reasonably presumed in their natural designation to regard the same end. Wherefore, as upon consideration of that ample provision, which is made in nature for the necessary sustenance, defence, and relief, for the convenience, delight, and satisfaction of every creature, any man, who is not careless or stupid, may be induced to cry out with the Psalmist, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all:* so may he, with no less reason and ground, after him pronounce and acknowledge; *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: Thy mercy is great unto the heavens: Thy mercy is great above the heavens.* It is, indeed, because divine goodness is freely diffusive and communicative of itself; because essential love is active and fruitful in beneficence; because highest excellency is void of

Ps. civ. 24.

xxxiii. 5; cxix. 64; lvii. 10; cviii. 4; civ. 10, &c; lxv. 11; ciii. 4.

Digitized by Google

all envy, selfishness, and tenacity, that the world was produced such as it was; those perfections being intrinsical to God's nature, disposed him to bestow so much of being, of beauty, of pleasure upon his creatures: *He openeth his hand, they are filled with good:* it is from God's open hand, his unconfined bounty and liberality, that all creatures do receive all that good which fills them, which satisfies their needs, and satiates their desires. Every pleasant object we view, every sweet and savoury morsel we taste, every fragrancy we smell, every harmony we hear; the wholesome, the cheering, the useful, yea, the innocent and inoffensive qualities of every thing we do use and enjoy, are so many perspicuous arguments of divine goodness; we may not only by our reason collect it, but we even touch and feel it with all our senses. Ps. civ. 28.

The like conclusion may be inferred from the observation of divine Providence. Every signification or experiment, whence we may reasonably infer that divine power and wisdom do concur in upholding, managing, and directing the general state of things, or the particular affairs of men, being well examined and weighed, would afford reason apt to persuade, that the Governor of the world is graciously affected toward his creatures and subjects. The general preservation of things in their natural constitution and order; the dispensing constant vicissitudes of season, so as may serve for the supply of our needs; the maintaining such a course of things in the world, that, notwithstanding the great irregularity of will, and violence of passion in so many persons, yet men do ordinarily shift so as to live tolerably upon earth in peace and

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

safety, and enjoyment of competent accommodations for life, with the aids and consolations arising from mutual society, the supports, encouragements, and rewards of virtue many times in a strange manner administered; the restraints, disappointments, and seasonable chastisements of wickedness, especially when it grows exorbitant and outrageous, unexpectedly intervening, with the like passages of Providence, will, to him that shall regard the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands, sufficiently declare as the other glorious attributes, (wisdom, power, and justice,) so especially the goodness of him who presides over the world; assuring that he is a friend to the welfare, and dislikes the misery of mankind. He that shall well observe and consider, how among so many fierce and hard-hearted, so many crafty and spiteful, so many domineering and devouring spirits, the poor and weak, the simple and harmless sort of people do however subsist, and enjoy somewhat, cannot but suspect that an undiscernible hand, full of pity and bounty, doth often convey the necessary supports of life to them, doth often divert imminent mischiefs from them; cannot but acknowledge it credible what the Holy Scripture teacheth, that God is the friend, and patron, and protector of those needy and helpless people, redeeming their soul from deceit and violence, as the Psalmist speaks; that he is, as the Prophet expresseth it, *A strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.* He that shall remark, how frequently, in an unaccountable way, succour and relief do spring up to

Ps. xxviii. 5. Isai. v. 12.

Ps. xiv. 6; x. 14; lxxii. 12;

Isai. xxv. 4.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

just and innocent persons; so that in a whole age, as the Psalmist observed, such persons do not appear destitute or forsaken; how also iniquity is commonly stopped in its full career, and then easily receives a check, when its violence seemed uncontrollable; how likewise many times the world is rescued from confusions and distractions unextricable by any visible wit or force; with other like occurrences in human affairs; must admit it for a reasonable hypothesis (fit to render a cause of such appearances) that a transcendent goodness doth secretly interpose, furthering the production of such effects: he must upon such observation be ready to verify that of the Psalmist: *Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth the earth.* St Paul instructs us, that in past times (that is, in all generations from the beginning of things) God did attest himself to be the Governor of the world: How? ἀγαθοποιῶν, by his beneficence; *Giving to men showers from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness:* competent evidences, it seems, these were of his providence, and withal (supposing that) certain demonstrations of his goodness: although some have abused this kind of testimony, or argumentation, so valid in itself, unto a contrary purpose; alleging, that if God ruled the world, so much wickedness and impiety would not be tolerated therein; that ingrateful and evil men could not so thrive and flourish; that more speedy and more severe vengeance would be executed; that benefits would not be scattered among the crowd of men, with so promiscuous and undistinguishing a freeness. But such discourses, upon a just and true

Ps. xxxvii. 25.

lviii. 11.

Acts xiv. 17.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

account, do only infer the great patience and clemency, the unconfined mercy and bounty of our Lord; that he is in disposition very different from pettish and impatient man, who, should he have the reins put into his hands, and in his administration of things should be so often neglected, crossed, abused, would soon overturn all things; and, being himself discomposed with passion, would precipitate the world into confusion and ruin.

Things would not have subsisted hitherto, and continued in their orderly course, but by the moderation of an immense goodness; by that

Magni custos clementia mundi[b].

Lam. iii. 22. It is *By the Lord's mercies that we* (we, the whole body of sinful men, so guilty of heinous provocations and rebellions against our Maker) *are not* Hos. xi. 8. *consumed.* And what again God in the Prophet speaks concerning Israel, he might have applied to the whole nation of men: *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man:* the reason (for I am God, and not man) is observable; implying (upon parity of reason in the cases, concerning that one nation, and concerning the body of men) that it is an indulgence and forbearance above, if not contrary to the temper of man, and even beyond human conceit, whereby the state of things here doth subsist, and is preserved from ruin.

Thus Nature and thus Providence do bear witness concerning the disposition of God. As for

[b] Claudian. [De Laud. Stilich. II. 6.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

Scripture, there is nothing either in way of positive assertion more frequently inculcated, or by more illustrious examples set forth, and made palpable, than this attribute of God. When God would impart a portraiture or description of himself to his dearest friend and favourite, Moses; the first and chief lineaments thereof are several sorts, or several instances of goodness; he expresses himself *Merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness:* (*Merciful: El rachum*[o]) a God of pitying, or strong in pity; that is, most apt to commiserate and to succour those who are in need or distress. *Gracious,* that is, ready both freely to forgive wrongs, and to dispense favours. *Longsuffering,* or *longus irarum,* that is, not soon moved, or apt easily to conceive displeasure; not hasty in execution of vengeance, or venting his anger in hurtful effects. *Abundant in goodness,* that is, not sparing as to quantity or quality, either in the multitude or magnitude of his favours, but in all respects exceedingly liberal; conferring willingly both very many and very great benefits. Such did God represent himself to Moses, when he desired a fuller knowledge and nearer acquaintance with him, than ordinary means afford. The same character in substance we have often repeated, and sometimes with advantage of emphatical expression, well deserving our observation and regard; as when the prophet Joel saith, that *God is penitent, or sorry, for evil inflicted;* and Micah, that *He delighteth in mercy;* and when Nehemiah calleth him a *God of pardons;* and when Isaiah represents him as *Waiting* (or seeking occasions) *to be gracious:*

Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Ps. lxxxvi. 5; ciii. 8, &c.

Joel ii. 13. Micah vii. 18. Neh. ix. 17.

Isai. xxx. 18.

[o] אל רחום

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

and all this in the Old Testament, where God seems to look upon man with a less serene and debonair aspect. Indeed, as that dispensation (suitably to the nature and condition of things under it) doth set out God's mercy and goodness, with especial relation to this present world, or temporal estate; so the new one more abundantly displays his more excellent care and love of our souls; his great tenderness of our spiritual and eternal welfare. It is all of it in its nature and design but as it were one entire declaration of the Τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ
Rom. ii. 4. Θεοῦ, (*The beneficial disposition, the benignity,* or *bountifulness of God,* as St Paul telleth us;) it is a rare project of divine philanthropy; an illustrious affidavit of God's wonderful propensity to bless and save mankind; manifested by the highest expressions and instances of love and goodness that were
Rom. viii. 32. possible. (For his not sparing his own Son, *The*
Heb. i. 3. *express image of his substance,* the dearest object of his infinite love, the partaker of his eternal nature and glory, but delivering him up a sacrifice for our offences; his most earnest wooing our baseness and unworthiness to reconciliation with him, and admission or acceptance of his favour; his tendering upon so fair and easy terms an endless life in perfect joy and bliss; his furnishing us with so plentiful means and powerful aids for attaining that happy state—
Rom. v. 21. how pregnant demonstrations are these, of unspeakable goodness toward us! whence) The ordinary
2 Cor. xiii. 11; 1. 3. titles in this dispensation attributed unto him, are,
1 Pet. v. 10. *The God of love and peace, of hope, of patience; of*
Eph. ii. 4. *all grace, of all consolation; the father of pities,*
James v. 11. *rich in mercy, full of bowels; love and goodness*
1 John iv. 8. *itself.* Thus doth the Scripture positively assert

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

God's goodness; thus it directly represents and describes his gracious disposition toward us. And as for examples, (which must serve as to illustrate and explain, so also to verify and assure matters of this nature,) if we carefully attend to God's ordinary proceedings with men there recorded, we shall find this disposition very conspicuous in them. Who can recount the number, or set out the value of those instances wherein God's goodness is expressed toward such as loved him? of his admirable condescension in drawing them to him; of the affectionate tenderness with which he constantly embraced them; of his merciful indulgence toward them, when provoked by their untowardly behaviour; of his kind acceptance, and munificent recompensing their endeavours to please him; of his deep compassionating their sufferings; of his vigilant carefulness over them, and over all their concernments? Methinks the highest expressions that language, assisted with all its helps of metaphor and resemblance, can afford, are very languid and faint in comparison of what they strain to represent, when the goodness of God toward them who love him comes to be expressed: *As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him: like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him:* so David strives to utter it, but with similitudes far short of the truth. If any will come near to reach it, it is that in Moses and Zechariah, when they are compared to *The apple of God's eye,* that is, to the most dear and tender part, as it were, about him.

Luke vi. 35.

Ps. ciii. 11, 13; xxxvi. 6.

Deut. xxxii. 10. Zech. ii. 8.

We find them often styled, and ever treated, as friends and as children; and that in a sense

John xv. 14. 2 Chron. xx. 7.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

transcending the vulgar signification of those words; for, what friendship could endure, could pass over, could forget, could admit an entire reconciliation and re-establishment in affection after such heinous indignities, such infidelities, such undutifulness, as were those of Adam, of Noah, of David, of Peter? Who would have received into favour and familiarity a Manasses, a Magdalen, a Paul? Who would so far extend his regard upon the posterity (upon such a posterity, so untoward, so unworthy) of his friend, as God did upon that of Abraham, in respect unto him? What great prince would employ his principal courtiers to guard and serve a poor attendant, a mean subject of his? Yet, *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;* and many instances we have of those glorious inhabitants of heaven by God's appointment stooping down to wait upon and to perform service to the sons of men. But upon examples of this nature, being numberless, and composing indeed the main body of the Sacred History, (it being chiefly designed to represent them,) I shall not insist; I shall only observe, for preventing or satisfying objections, (yea, indeed, for turning them to the advantage and confirmation of that which we assert,) that even in those cases, wherein God's highest severity hath been exercised, when God hath purposed to exhibit most dreadful instances of his justice upon the most provocative occasions; we may discern his goodness eminently shewing itself[d]: that even in the greatest extremity

Ps. xxxiv. 7.

[d] Γίνεται φιλανθρωπία ἡ τιμωρία. οὕτω γὰρ ἐγὼ πείθομαι κολάζειν τὸν Θεόν.—Greg. Naz. [Orat. XXXVIII. Opp. Tom. I. p. 671 A.]

Ἐγὼ γὰρ τοσαύτην περιουσίαν εἶναι φημὶ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ κηδεμονίας,

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

of his displeasure, in his acts of highest vengeance, *Mercy doth* κατακαυχᾶσθαι τῆς κρίσεως, (as St James speaketh,) *boast itself, and triumph over justice:* that God, as the sun, (to use Tertullian's similitude) when he seems most to infest and scorch us, doth even then dispense useful and healthful influences upon us[e]. Even, I say, in the most terrible and amazing examples of divine justice (such as were the ejecting and excluding mankind from Paradise; the general destruction in the Deluge; the exscinding and extirpation of the Amorites, together with other inhabitants of Canaan; the delivering Israel and Judah into the Assyrian thraldom; the final destruction of Jerusalem, together with the dispersion of the Jewish nation over the world, and its sad consequences) we may (not hardly) observe particulars, more than savouring of great mercy and goodness[f].

James ii. 13.

1 That (in most of these cases, in all according to some account) God was not moved to the displeasure productive of those effects but upon very great considerations: that he did not seek advantages, nor embrace all occasions; but was incensed by superlative degrees of iniquity and impurity, (such in their own nature, and much aggravated by their circumstances,) such as rendered common life inconvenient and insupportable to men; made

ὡς μὴ μόνον ἀφ' ὧν ἐτίμησεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀφ' ὧν ἐκόλασεν, ὁμοίως ἡμᾶς δύνασθαι τὴν ἀγαθότητα αὐτοῦ δεικνύναι, καὶ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 511.]

Ὁ Θεὸς ἀπαθὴς ὤν, κἂν ἐνεργετῇ, κἂν κολάζῃ, ὁμοίως ἐστὶν ἀγαθός. —Id. ibid. [p. 512.]

[e] Unicus sol est, O homo, qui mundum hunc temperat; et quando non putas optimus et utilis, et quum tibi acrior et infestior, &c.—Tertul. con. Marc. II. 2. [Opp. p. 381 B.]

[f] Vide Chrys. Opp. Tom. VI. Or. VIII. p. 63. optime.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

the earth to stink with their filth and corruption; to groan under the burden and weight of them; to pant and labour for a riddance from them.

2 That God did not upon the first glimpses of provocation proceed to the execution and discharge of his wrath, but did with wonderful patience expect a change in the offenders, *Waiting to be gracious*, as the Prophet speaketh; affording more than competent time, and means more than sufficient of appeasing him by repentance; vouchsafing frequent admonitions, solicitations, threatenings, moderate corrections, and other such proper methods conducing to their amendment and to their preservation.

Isai. xxx. 18.

3 That the inflictions themselves, how grievous soever in appearance, were not really extreme in measure; not accompanied with so acute torments, nor with so lingering pains, nor with so utter a ruin, as might have been inflicted; but that (as Ezra, in respect to one of those cases, confesseth) they were less than their iniquities deserved: that, as it is in the Psalm, *He did not stir up all his wrath*; which would have immediately consumed them, or infinitely tormented them.

Ez. ix. 13.

Ps. lxxviii. 38.

4 That (consequently upon some of those premises) the afflictions brought upon them were in a sort rather necessary than voluntary in respect of him; rather a natural fruit of their dispositions and dealings, than a free result of his will; however, contrary to his primary intentions and desires. Whence he no less truly than earnestly disclaims having any pleasure in their death, that he afflicted willingly, or grieved the children of men; and charges their disasters upon themselves, as the sole causes of them.

Ezek. xviii. 23, 32; xxxiii. 11. Lam. iii. 33. Hos. xiii. 9.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

5 That, further, the chastisements inflicted were wholesome and profitable, both in their own nature, and according to his design[g]; both in respect to the generality of men, (who by them were warned, and by such examples deterred from incurring the like mischiefs; were kept from the inconveniences, secured from the temptations, the violences, the allurements, the contagions of the present evil state; according to that reason alleged for punishments of this kind: *All the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously,*) and in regard to the sufferers themselves, who thereby were prevented from proceeding further in their wicked courses[h]; accumulating (or *Treasuring up,* as the Apostle speaketh) further degrees of wrath, as obdurate and incorrigible people will surely do: (*Why,* saith the Prophet, *should ye be stricken any more?* (to what purpose is moderate correction?) *Ye will revolt more and more.*) That he did with a kind of violence to his own inclinations, and reluctancy, inflict punishments on them: *O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up, O Ephraim!* Yea further:

Deut. xvii. 13.

Rom. ii. 5.

Isai. i. 5; xxvi. 10.

Hos. xi. 8.

6 That, during their sufferance, God did bear compassion toward them who underwent it: *His bowels,* as we are told, *sounded and were troubled;* his *Heart was turned within him;* his *Repentings were kindled together; In all their afflictions himself was afflicted; He remembered, and considered they were but dust;* that *They were but flesh,* (that they were but of a weak and frail temper; that they were

Isai. lxiii. 9, 15. Hos. xi. 8. Jer. xxxi. 20. Gen. vi. 3; viii. 21. Ps. ciii. 14; lxxviii. 39.

[g] Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 511—13.]
Ὁμοῦ καὶ δικαστὴς καὶ ἰατρὸς καὶ διδάσκαλός ἐστιν ὁ Θεός.—Ibid. [p. 513.]

[h] Ἐπιτίθησι τὴν τιμωρίαν, οὐ τῶν ἀπελθόντων ἁπάντων δίκην, ἀλλὰ τὰ μέλλοντα διορθούμενος.—Chrys. Tom. VIII. p. 99.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

naturally prone to corruption and evil,) and did therefore pity their infirmity and their misery.

Hab. iii. 2. Gen. vi. 3; viii. 21. Jer. xxix. 11; xxxiii. 6.

7 That *God in his wrath remembered mercy,* (as the prophet Habakkuk speaks,) mixing gracious intentions of future refreshment and reparation with the present executions of justice. *I know,* saith he in the prophet Jeremiah, *the thoughts that I think toward you; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Behold, I will bring health and cure, I will cure them, and will reveal unto them abundance of peace and truth.*

Isai. liv. 7. And, *For a small moment,* saith he again in Isaiah, *have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I*

Ezek. xiv. 2, 23. *gather thee.* And, *Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem*—and, *Ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it,* saith the Lord; (he saith so in Ezekiel;) *without cause,* that is, without a beneficial design toward them.

8 Lastly, That he always signified a readiness to turn from his anger, and to forgive them; and upon very equal and easy terms to be fully reconciled to them: according to that in the Psalm, *He doth not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever;* but upon any reasonable overtures of humiliation, confession, and conversion to him, was ready to abate, yea, to remove the effects of his displeasure: *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*

Ps. ciii. 9.

xcix. 8.

These particulars, if we attentively survey those dreadful examples of divine severity fore-mentioned, (the greatest which history acquaints us with, or which have been shewed on this theatre of human affairs,) we may observe most of them in all, all of

Digitized by Google

them in some, either plainly expressed, or sufficiently insinuated by the circumstances observable in the historical narrations concerning them; so that even the harshest instances of God's wrathful dealing with some men, may well serve to the illustration of his mercy and goodness toward all men; may evince it true, what our Lord affirms, that, *God is* χρηστὸς ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηρούς, *kind and beneficent even to the most ingrateful and unworthy persons.* To make which observation good, and consequently to assert the verity of our text (that, *God is good unto all, and merciful over all his works*) against the most plausible exceptions, let us examine the particulars. SERM. XLIX. Luke vi. 35.

I. The punishment inflicted on mankind for the first transgression containeth in it much of depth and mystery, surpassing perhaps all capacity of man to reach; its full comprehension being by divine wisdom, I conceive, purposely concealed from us; so that I cannot pretend thoroughly to explain it; and shall not therefore speak much about it.

This, indeed, is clear, that God did in his proceedings, occasioned thereby, intend remarkably to evidence his grievous resentment and indignation against wilful disobedience; yet in the management thereof we may observe, that,

1 After that provocation (in itself so high, and liable to so great aggravations) God did express his resentment in so calm and gentle a manner[1], that Adam, though abashed upon the conscience of his fault, was not yet by the vehemency of the reproof utterly dismayed or dejected.

[1] Vid. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. [Opp. Tom. VI. pp. 512, 513.]
Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε, καθάπερ εἰκὸς ἦν ὑβρισμένον εἰπεῖν, ὦ μιαρὲ, καὶ παμμίαρε, &c.—[Ibid. p. 512.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

2 God used great moderation in the infliction of this punishment; mitigating the extremity of the sentence justly decreed and plainly declared to
Gen. ii. 17. Adam, (that, in case of his offending against the law prescribed him, he should immediately die,) for notwithstanding his forfeiture that very day of life, God reprieved him, and allowed him a long life, almost of a thousand years, after.

3 God did not quite reject man thereupon, nor did withdraw his fatherly care and providence from him, but openly continued them; insomuch that, immediately after the curse pronounced upon our first parents, the next passage we meet with is,
Gen. iii. 21. that, *Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*

4 Although, indeed, man was by his fault a great loser, and became deprived of high advantages; yet the mercy of God did leave him in no very deplorable estate, simply considered, as to his life here; the relics of his first estate, and the benefits continued to him, being very considerable; so that we, the inheritors of that great disaster, do commonly find the enjoyment of life, with the conveniences attending it, to be sweet and desirable.

5 The event manifests, that while God in appearance so severely punished mankind, he did in his mind reserve thoughts of highest kindness toward us; even then designing not only to restore us to our former degree, but to raise us to a capacity of obtaining a far more high pitch of happiness. While he excluded us from a terrestrial paradise here, he provided a far better celestial one, into which, if we please, by obedience to his holy laws we may certainly enter. So that in this of all most

Digitized by Google

heavy instance of vengeance, God's exceeding goodness and clemency do upon several considerations most clearly shine. SERM. XLIX.

II. The calamity, which by the general Deluge did overflow the world, was not (we may consider) brought upon men but in regard to the most enormous offences long continued in, and after amendment was become desperate: not till after much forbearance, and till men were grown to a superlative pitch of wickedness, by no fit means (by no friendly warning, no sharp reprehension, no moderate chastisement) corrigible: not until the earth was become (especially for persons of any innocence or integrity) no tolerable habitation, but a theatre of lamentable tragedies, a seat of horrid iniquity, a sink of loathsome impurity. So that in reason it was to be esteemed rather a favour to mankind to rescue it from so unhappy a state, than to suffer it to persist therein. To snatch men away out of so uncomfortable a place, from so wretched a condition, was a mercy; it had been a judgment to have left them annoying, rifling, and harassing the world; biting, tearing, and devouring; yea, defiling and debauching each other; and so heaping upon themselves loads of guilt, and deeper obligations to vengeance. *The earth,* saith the text, *was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth;* which universal and extreme corruption had not in probability sprung up in a small time; (for, Gen. vi. 11, 12.

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus[k],

is true not only of single men, but of communities;

[k] [Juv. Sat. II. 83.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

no people, no age doth suddenly degenerate into extreme degrees of wickedness;) so that the divine patience had long endured and attended upon men before the resolution of thus punishing them was taken up; the which also was not at first peremptory and irreversible, but in God's design and desire it was revocable; for the world had a long reprieve after the sentence passed; execution was deferred till Noah's long preaching of righteousness, and denouncing of judgment in a manner so notorious and signal, (not by verbal declarations only, but by the visible structure of the ark,) could prevail nothing toward their amendment, but was either distrusted or disregarded, and perhaps derided by them. For, as St Peter tells us, *They were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing;* that is, (as is collected by several interpreters from the text of the story,) during no less than one hundred and twenty years; a competent time for their recollecting themselves, and endeavouring by amendment of life to prevent the ruin threatened to come upon them. Yet notwithstanding that, this obstinate and incorrigible disobedience did so much displease God, as that in consideration thereof God is said to have repented that he made man on the earth, and to have been thereby grieved at the heart: yet did he so temper his anger as not utterly to destroy mankind, but provided against its total ruin, by preserving one family as a seminary thereof; preserving the father thereof (questionless by a special grace) from the spreading contagion, inspiring him with faith, and qualifying him for the favour, which by him he designed to communicate

1 Pet. iii. 20.
2 Pet. ii. 5.
Gen. vi. 3.
vi. 6.

Digitized by Google

unto the world; the reparation thereof, and restoring the generations of men. So that also through this passage of providence, how dismal and dreadful soever at first sight, much goodness will be transparent to him that looks upon it attentively.

III. In the next place, as to that extermination and excision of the Canaanites, which carries so horrible an appearance of severity, we may find it qualifiable, if we consider, that for the nature of the trespasses which procured it, they were insufferably heinous and abominable: most sottish, barbarous, and base superstitions, (cruelty and impurity being essential ingredients into their performances of Religion, and it being piety with them to be exceedingly wicked,) and, in their other practice, most beastly lasciviousnesses, most bloody violences, oppressions, and rapines generally abounding. So that for those men themselves, who were by turns, as it happened, the authors and the objects of these dealings, it could not be desirable to continue in a state of living so wretched and uncomfortable. Impunity had been no mercy to such people, but rather a cruelty; cutting them off must needs be the greatest favour they were capable of, it being only removing them from a hell here, and preventing their deserving many worse hells hereafter. Even to themselves it was a favour, and a greater one to their posterity, whom they might have brought forth to succeed into their courses, and to the consequences of them; whom they would have engaged into their wicked customs, and their woful mischiefs. They were not so destroyed from the land, until it grew uninhabitable in any tolerable manner, and itself could not, as it were, endure

Lev. xviii.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

them any longer, but (as the text doth most significantly express it) did spue them out; being like a stomach surcharged with foul or poisonous matter, which it loathes and is pained with, and therefore naturally labours to expel. Neither was this sad doom executed upon them till after four hundred years of forbearance; for even in Abraham's time God took notice of their iniquity, then born and growing; and gave account of his suspending their punishment; *Because,* said he, *the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full,* (that is, was not yet arrived to a pitch of desperate obstinacy and incorrigibility:) while there was the least glimpse of hope, the least relics of any reason, any regret, any shame in them, the least possibility of recovery, God stopped his avenging hand: but when all ground of hope was removed, the whole stock of natural light and strength was embezzled, all fear, all remorse, all modesty were quite banished away, all means of cure had proved ineffectual, the gangrene of vice had seized on every part, iniquity was grown mature and mellow; then was the stroke of justice, indeed, not more seasonable than necessary; then was the fatal sword the only proper remedy; then so with one stroke to cut off them, and their sins, and their mischiefs, and their miseries together, was an argument no less strong and clear of God's merciful goodness, than of his just anger toward them.

Lev. xviii. 28.

Gen. xv. 16.

IV. The like account we may render of God's judgments upon the people of Israel. If we consult the prophets, who declare the state of things, the facts, the dispositions, the guilts, that brought them down from heaven, we shall see, that they

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

came upon account of an universal apostasy from both the faith and practice of true Religion; a deep corruption (*Like that in the days of Gibeah,* as the prophet Hosea speaketh) in mind and manners; an utter perverting of all truth and right; an obstinate compliance with, or emulation of the most abominable practices of the heathen nations about them; an universal apostasy, I say, from God and all goodness; a thorough prevalence of all iniquity. Hear the Prophets expressing it, and describing them: Jeremiah; *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.* Isaiah; *The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant: Ah sinful nation! a people laden with iniquities, a seed of evil-doers; children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward,* &c. Thus do these and other Prophets in a like strain describe in the gross the state of things preceding those judgments. And in Ezekiel (in divers places, particularly in the 8th, but especially in the 22d chapter) we have their offences in detail, and by parts (their gross impieties, their grievous cruelties, extortions, and oppressions) set out copiously, and in most lively colours. And as the quality of their provocations was so bad, and the extension of them so large, so was their condition desperate; there were no means of remedy left, no hopes of amendment; so was their forehead covered with impudence,

Hos. ix. 9.

Jer. v. 1.

Isai. xxiv. 5; i. 4.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

their heart hardened with obstinacy, their minds deeply tinctured with habitual pravity and perverseness: *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,* saith Jeremiah concerning them. All methods of reclaiming them had proved fruitless; no favourable dealings, no gentle admonition or kind instruction would avail any thing; for it is of them the prophet Isaiah saith, *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness.* No advices, no reproofs (how frequent, how vehement, how urgent soever) had any effect upon them. Almighty God declares often, that he had spoken unto them rising up early, but they would not hear nor regard his speech; did not only neglect and refuse, but despise, loathe, mock, and reproach it, (turning their back upon him, pulling away their shoulder, stiffening their neck, and stopping their ears, that they should not hear;) that he had spread out his hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying people; to a people that (with extreme insolence and immodesty) provoked him to anger continually to his face. Nor could any tenders of mercy allure or move them: *I said* (God said it in Jeremiah) *after all these things, Turn unto me; but she returned not. Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin;* and innumerable the like overtures we have of grace and mercy to them; all which they proudly and perversely rejected, persisting in their wicked courses: they even repelled and

Jer. xiii. 23.

Isai. xxvi. 10.

Jer. xxv. 4; xxxii. 33; vi. 10. Zech. vii. 11. Neh. ix. 29, 30. Isai. lxv. 2, 3. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

Jer. iii. 7; vii. 3; iv. 1, 14; xviii. 11; xxvi. 13.

Ezek. xviii. 30.

Jer. xi. 21; xxxii. 30.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

silenced, they rudely treated and persecuted the prophets sent unto them with messages of kind warning and overtures of grace; so obstructing all access of mercy to themselves: *They say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things:* so Isaiah reports their proceeding. *Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?* so St Stephen expostulates with them. Neither were gentler chastisements designed for their correction and cure anywise available; they made no impression on them, they produced no change in them: *In vain,* saith God, *I have smitten your children, they have received no correction:* and, *Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return:* and, *The people turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.* Unto this καταρτισμὸς εἰς ἀπώλειαν, this perfect fitness, (as St Paul speaketh,) this maturity of desperate and irrecoverable impiety, had that people grown, not at once and on a sudden, but by continual steps of provocation, through a long course of time, during that divine patience sparing them, and by various expedients striving to recover them. This consideration is frequently insisted upon, especially in the prophet Jeremiah: *The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me,* &c. Well then, after so many

Matt. xxiii. 37. Isai. xxx. 10. Acts vii. 52. Isai. i. 16, 17, &c. Neh. ix. 29. Jer. ii. 30. v. 3. Isai. ix. 13. Rom. ix. 22. Jer. xxxii. 30; vii. 25; xvi. 12; xi. 7. Ezra ix. 7.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

hundred years of abused patience, and unsuccessful labour to reclaim them, it was needful that justice should have her course upon them: yet how then did God inflict it, with what mildness and moderation, with what pity and relenting? *Nevertheless,* say they in Nehemiah, *for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God:* and, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve,* doth Ezra confess: *I will not execute the fierceness of my anger,* doth God himself resolve and declare in Hosea. So mild he was as to the measure of his punishing; and what compassion accompanied it those pathetical expressions declare: *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him. In all their afflictions he was afflicted,* &c. We may add, that notwithstanding all these provocations of his wrath, and abusings of his patience, which thus necessitated God to execute his vengeance; yet even during the execution thereof, and while his hand was so stretched forth against them, he did retain thoughts of favour, and intentions of doing good, even toward this so ingrateful, so insensible, so incorrigible a people: *For a small moment,* saith God, *have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee: I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Now these things being seriously laid together, have we not occasion and ground sufficient even in this instance, no less to

Neh. ix. 31.

Ezra ix. 13.

Hos. xi. 9.

Hos. xi. 8.

Jer. xxxi. 20.

Isai. lxiii. 9; liv. 7.

Jer. xxix. 11; xxxiii. 6, 7.

Digitized by Google

admire and adore the wonderful benignity, mercy, and patience of God, than to dread and tremble at his justice? SERM. XLIX.

V. As for the last so calamitous and piteous destruction of Jerusalem, with the grievous consequences thereof, as we might apply thereto the former considerations, so we shall only observe what was peculiar in that case; that God dispensed such means to prevent it, (to remove the meritorious causes thereof, obstinate impenitency and incredulity, resisting the truth by him sent from heaven with so clear a revelation and powerful confirmation; despising the Spirit of God, and the dictates of their own conscience; basely misusing divers ways, and at last cruelly murdering the Son of God;) such means, I say, God did employ for the removing those provocatives of vengeance, which, as our Lord himself saith, were sufficient to have converted Tyre and Sidon; yea, to have preserved Sodom itself; so that our Saviour could with a compassionate grief deplore the unsuccessfulness of his tender affection, and solicitous care for their welfare, in these passionate terms: *How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but ye would not!* That St John the Baptist's sharp reproofs, his powerful exhortations, his downright and clear forewarnings of what would follow, (*Even now,* said he, *the axe is laid to the root of the tree,*) attended with so remarkable circumstances of his person and his carriage, (which induced all the world about him to regard him as no ordinary man, but a special instrument of God and messenger from heaven,) did yet find no effect considerable: the Pharisees and lawyers, those

Matt. xi. 21; xxiii. 37; iii. 10.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

corrupt judges, whose authority managed the blind multitude, defeating the counsel of God toward themselves, as St Luke speaketh, (that is, defeating his gracious purpose of reclaiming them from disobedience, and consequently of withholding the judgments imminent,) they reviled the person of that venerable prophet; *He hath a devil,* said they: they slighted his premonitions, and rejected his advices, by observing which, those dreadful mischiefs, which fell upon their rebellious heads, might have been averted. We may add, that even those fearful judgments were tempered with mixtures of favourable design, not only to the community of mankind, (which, by so remarkable a vengeance upon the persecutors of our Lord, and the scorners of his doctrine, was converted unto, or confirmed in the Christian faith,) but even toward that people whom it served to convince of their errors and crimes; to induce them to repentance, to provoke them unto the acknowledgment and embracing of God's truth, so palpably vindicated by him. So that I might here apply that passage of St Paul, (if not directly and adequately according to his sense, yet with no incongruous allusion at least,) *Have they stumbled, that they should fall?* (or, was there no other design of God's judgments upon them but their utter ruin?) μὴ γένοιτο· *no such matter; but through their fall salvation came to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy* (or emulation). And, in effect, as our Lord in the midst of his sufferings did affectionately pray for God's mercy upon them, as the Apostles did offer reconciliation unto them all indifferently who would repent, and were willing to embrace it; so were

Luke vii. 30.

Matt. xi. 18.

Rom. xi. 11.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

such of them as were disposed to comply with those invitations received to grace, how deeply soever involved in the continued guilt of those enormous persecutions, injuries, and blasphemies; as particularly St Paul, that illustrious example of God's patience and mercy in this case. So that neither by this instance is any attribute of God more signalized, than his transcendent goodness, in like manner as by the former instances, and in analogy to them by all others, that may be assigned. By all of them it will appear, that God is primarily and of himself disposed to do all fitting and possible good to men, not to inflict evil more than is fit and necessary; that God is indeed *optimus ex naturæ proprietate, most good according to property of nature,* although *justus ex causæ necessitate, severe from the necessity of the case,* as Tertullian[1] speaketh. To afflict men (either some men singly or whole societies of men) may be sometimes expedient upon several accounts; for vindicating the esteem, and supporting the interest of goodness, which may by impunity be disgraced, endamaged, endangered; for the discrimination of good and evil men in an observable manner; for the encouragement and comfort of the good, the reduction and amendment of the bad; for preventing the contagion, and stopping the progress of iniquity, whereupon greater guilts and worse mischiefs would ensue: it may be as necessary as sharp physic to cure public or private distempers[m]; as an instrument of rousing us out of our sinful lethargies; as that which may

1 Tim. i. 16.

[1] De Resur. Carnis. [Cap. XIV. Opp. p. 333 B.]

[m] Basil. Orat. Quod Deus non est causa mali, eleganter, et pulchre de hac re.

Digitized by Google

SERM XLIX.

cause us better to understand ourselves, and more to remember God; as a ground of fearing God, and an inducement to believe his providence. For those and many such purposes, to bring upon men things distasteful to sense may be very requisite; nor doth the doing it anywise prejudice the truth of divine goodness, but rather confirms it, commends it, and advances its just esteem. It would be a fond indulgence, not a wise kindness; a cruel, rather than a loving pity, to deal otherwise. In fine, we are to consider that all the mischiefs we undergo, God doth not so much bring them on us as we do pull them on ourselves[n]. They are

Wisd. i. 12. Αὐθαίρετα πήματα[o], *Affected*, or *self-chosen mischiefs*; they are, Κακὰ βλαστήματα προαιρέσεως, *Bad sprouts of our free choice*, as a Father calls them[p]; they are, as another Father saith[q], Ἑκουσίων κακῶν τὰ ἀκούσια ἔκγονα, *The unwilling offsprings of wilful evils*; they are the certain results of our own will, or the natural fruits of our actions; actions, which (however God desire, advise, command, persuade, entreat, excite) we do will, we are resolved to perform. *We in a manner*, as Salvian[r] saith, *do force God to do whatever he doeth in this kind; violently plucking*

[n] Πάντα κινεῖ καὶ πραγματεύεται ὁ Θεὸς, ὥστε ἡμᾶς ἀπαλλάξαι κολάσεως καὶ τιμωρίας.—Chrys. Opp. Tom. VIII. p. 100.

[o] Carm. Pythag. [v. 54.]

[p] Cyril. Hier. [Κακὸν αὐτεξούσιον, βλάστημα προαιρέσεως.—Catech. II. Opp. p. 21 B.]

[q] S. Joan. Damas. [De Fide Orthod. Lib. IV. c. 19. Opp. Tom. I. p. 289 E.]

[r] Vim Deo facimus iniquitatibus nostris . . . Cogimus ad ulciscendas criminum nostrorum immanitates nolentem Deum . . . Deus enim pius est ac misericors, et qui, ut scriptum est, neminem velit perire vel lædere, &c.—Salv. de Gubern. Dei. [Lib. V. p. 113.] et Lib. VIII. [p. 186, Ed. Baluz.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

down vengeance on our own heads; compelling the kind and merciful Lord, against his nature and will, to afflict us; not so much as giving him leave to spare us. God vehemently disclaims himself to be the original cause; to design, (according to absolute or primary intention,) to desire, to delight in our grief, or our ruin. *As I live, saith the Lord,* (and surely when God swears[s], we may believe that he is very serious,) *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. I call heaven to record this day against you, that I have set life and death before you: therefore choose life. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. He would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He would not have any perish, but that all should come to repentance. He made not death, nor hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living.* God then, if we may believe him, is not the first author of our calamities. Who then? He tells us himself: *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: thou hast fallen by thine own iniquity. Your sins have withholden good things from you. Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. How often would I have gathered you, but ye would not!* The designs and the endeavours of God do tend to our welfare and salvation; it is our will and our actions which only procure our ruin: *It is we,* that, as the Wise Man saith, *seek death in the error of our life, and pull upon our own selves destruction.* So that, to conclude this part of our discourse, even those passages of Providence, which at first glimpse appear

Ezek. xviii. 30; xxxiii. 11.

Deut. xxx. 19.

Lam. iii. 33.

1 Tim. ii. 4.

2 Pet. iii. 9.

Wisd. i. 13.

Hos. xiii. 9; xiv. 1. Jer. v. 25.

Isai. lxiv. 6.

Matt. xxiii. 37.

Wisd. i. 12.

[s] Miseros nos si nec juranti Deo credimus.— Hier.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

most opposite or disadvantageous to the goodness of God[t], (or to our opinion and belief concerning it,) do, being well sifted, nowise prejudice it, but rather serve to corroborate and magnify it.

I shall only further briefly touch (or rather but mention) the uses and effects, to the producing which, the consideration of God's goodness, in so manifold ways declared, should be applied.

1 It should beget in us hearty love and reverence toward God, in regard to this attribute so excellent and amiable in itself, so beneficial and advantageous to us. What can we esteem, what can we love, if so admirable goodness doth not affect us? How prodigiously cold and hard is that heart, which cannot be warmed and softened into affection by so melting a consideration!

2 It should produce, as grateful sense in our hearts, so real endeavours of thankful obedience in our lives. It should make us *Walk worthy of God, to all well-pleasing, bringing forth fruit in every good work;* taking heed of doing as did Hezekiah, of whom it is said, that, *He rendered not according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore was wrath upon him;* that we may not have that expostulation justly applied unto us, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?*

Col. i. 10.

2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

Deut. xxxii. 6.

3 It should engage us the more to fear God; complying with the Prophet's admonition, *Fear the Lord and his goodness;* considering that intimation

Hos. iii. 5.

[t] St Chrysostom in divers places doth insist upon the goodness of God in making and threatening hell itself.

Τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔλαττον, ἡ τῆς γεέννης ἀπειλὴ δείκνυσι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγαθότητα, &c.—Ἀνδρ. ζ'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 512.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

of the Psalmist, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;* observing that advice of Samuel, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him; for consider what great things he hath done for you.* For that, indeed, nothing is more terrible than goodness slighted, and patience abused.

Ps. cxxx. 4.

1 Sam. xii. 24.

4 It should humble, ashame, and grieve us, for having crossed and offended such exceeding goodness and mercy. It should cause us greatly to detest our sins, which lie under so heinous an aggravation; to be deeply displeased with ourselves, who have so unworthily committed them.

5 It should therefore render us wary and vigilant against the commission of any sin; that is, of incurring the guilt of so enormous ingratitude and baseness; making us cautious of doing like those, of whom it is confessed in Nehemiah; *They did eat, and were filled, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness: nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy laws behind their back.*

Neh. ix. 25, 26.

6 It should also breed and nourish in us faith and hope in God. For what reason can we have to distrust of so great goodness; that he will refuse to help us in our need; that he will fail in accomplishment of his promises; that he will withhold what is convenient for us? It should preserve us from despair[n]. What temptation can we have to despair of mercy, if we heartily repent of our misdoings, and sincerely endeavour to please him?

7 It should, upon the same account, excite us to a free and constant exercise of all devotions. For

[n] Vid. Chrys. ad Theod. II. Opp. Tom. VI. p. 63. Optimo et fuse.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

why should we be shy or fearful of entering into so friendly and favourable a presence? why should we be backward from having (upon any occasion or need) a recourse to him, who is so willing, so desirous, so ready to do us good? what should hinder us from delighting in oblations of blessing and praise unto him?

Matt. vii. 11.

8 It ought to render us submissive, patient, and contented under God's hand, of correction, or trial: as knowing that it cannot be without very just cause that such goodness seemeth displeased with us; that we are the chief causes of our suffering or our want; so that we can have no good cause to repine or complain: for, *Wherefore doth the living man complain?* since *a man* (suffers) *for the punishment of his sins;* since it is our sins that withhold good things from us: since also we considering this attribute may be assured, that all God's dispensations do aim and tend to our good.

Lam. iii. 39.

Jer. v. 25.

9 It should also, in gratitude toward God, and imitation of him, engage us to be good, kind, and bountiful, placable, and apt to forgive; meek and gentle, pitiful, and affectionate toward our brethren; to be good and merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful and benign even toward the wicked and ungrateful; to be kind unto one another, full of bowels, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

Luke vi. 35, 36. 1 John iii. 16. Coloss. iii. 13. Eph. iv. 32.

10 Lastly, we ought to have an especial care of perverting this excellent truth by mistakes and vain presumptions; that we do not turn the grace of God into wantonness, or occasion of licentious practice. Because God is very good and merciful, we must not conceive him to be fond, or slack, or careless;

Jude 4.

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

that he is apt to indulge us in sin, or to connive at our presumptuous transgression of his laws. No; Ἕπεται τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἢ ἀγαθὸν, ἡ μισοπονηρία, *The hatred of wickedness is consequent upon goodness even as such,* as Clemens Alexandrinus saith[x]. God, even as he is good, cannot but detest that which is opposite and prejudicial to goodness; he cannot but maintain the honour and interest thereof; he cannot, he will not endure us to dishonour him, to wrong our neighbour, to spoil ourselves. As he is a sure friend to us as his creatures, so he is an implacable enemy to us as impenitent rebels and apostates from our duty: *The wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.* As he is infinitely benign, so he is also perfectly holy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. *He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all workers of iniquity. His face is against them that do evil.* Finally, as God is gracious to all such as are capable of his love, and qualified for his mercy; so he is an impartial and upright Judge, who will deal with men according to their deserts, according to the tenor of his laws and ordinances; according to his immutable decree and word: so that as we have great reason to trust and hope in him, so we have no true ground to presume upon him, vainly to trifle, or insolently to dally with him.

Ps. xi. 5. Hab. i. 13. Ps. v. 4, 5. xxxiv. 16.

But I leave this point to be further improved by your meditations.

[x] [Ἕπεται τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἢ φύσει ἀγαθός, ἡ μισοπονηρία.—Pædag. Lib. I. cap. viii. Opp. Tom. I. p. 140.]

Digitized by Google

SERM. XLIX.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may through thy grace be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

END OF VOLUME III.

Digitized by Google

CAMBRIDGE:
PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google